START TODAY
HARDCORE FANZINE
ISSUE #9

BANE
CULTURE
LINE OF SIGHT
AGNOSTIC FRONT
CHAIN OF STRENGTH

Welcome to Start Today #9.

When I finished the last one, I really thought I was done. It's been a few years, but I started to get the urge to put another together. With the zine now being a digital PDF, I wasn't constrained to X amount of pages due to printing costs. This has let me add a lot more photos and expand layouts a little more than I have in the past. Doing this zine always works as a cleansing experience for me. I had been pretty down, yet somehow found inspiration in an episode of The Walking Dead. I don't remember who Carol was talking to, but she said "It happened. Now it's done. You live with it, or it eats you up." When I heard that, I wrote it down and stuck it in the folder I use when I make the zine. I ended up using that as one of the main motivators to get this going, and to move forward in my life. I spent some time getting in touch with who I was and rejecting what I was becoming. It felt good to find myself grounded again. From there, I began seeing things a little more clearly and began the journey to create this newest issue. It wasn't without some bumps in the road. All these years later, I can still find bands that excite me. The soundtrack for this issue has been Abuse of Power, Ecostrike, Drug Control, The Turn, Decline, Substance, Insist, Clear Focus, Glory, Put It Aside, and Odd Man Out. Do yourself a favor and check all these bands out! I want to say thank you for taking the time to download and read this zine. Start a band, do a zine, book a show,
or just show some random kindness to someone.
Change starts within.

Drop me a line at:
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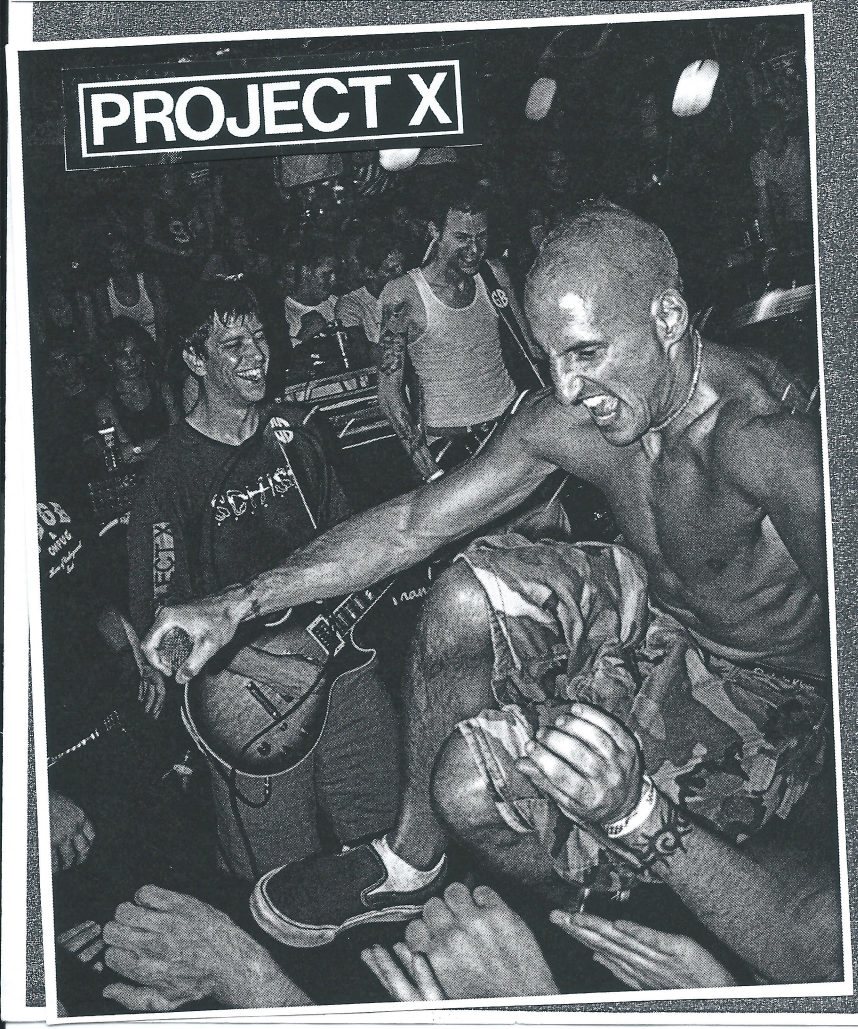
Were we ever really saying something

FLOORPUNCH

BURN


PROJECT X

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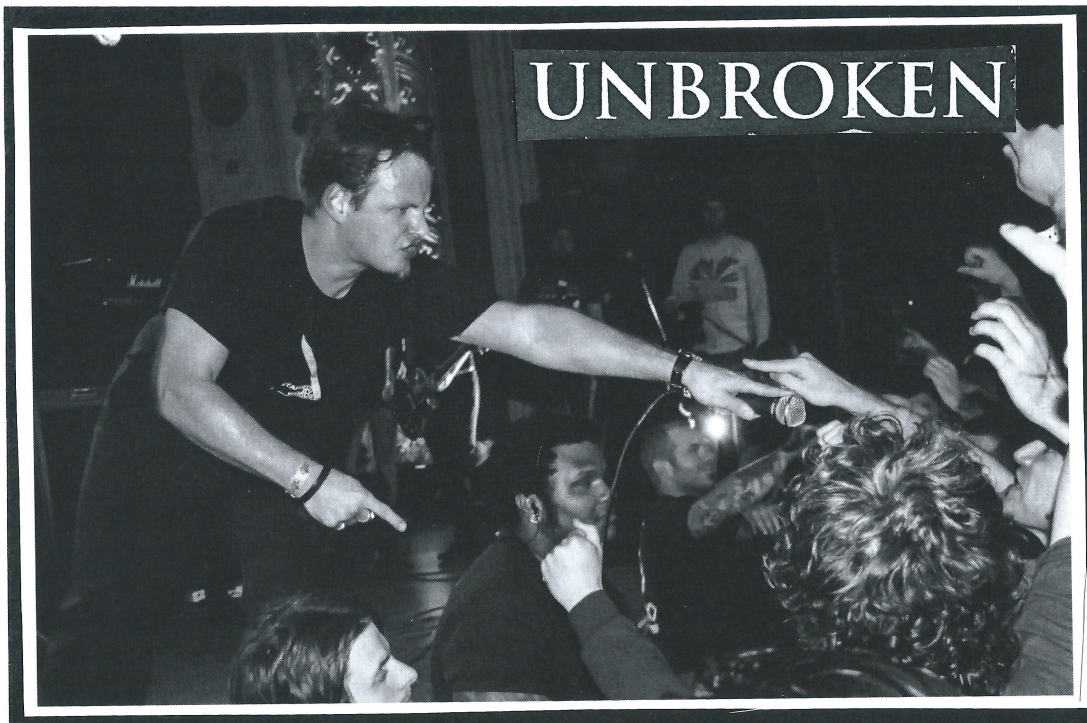
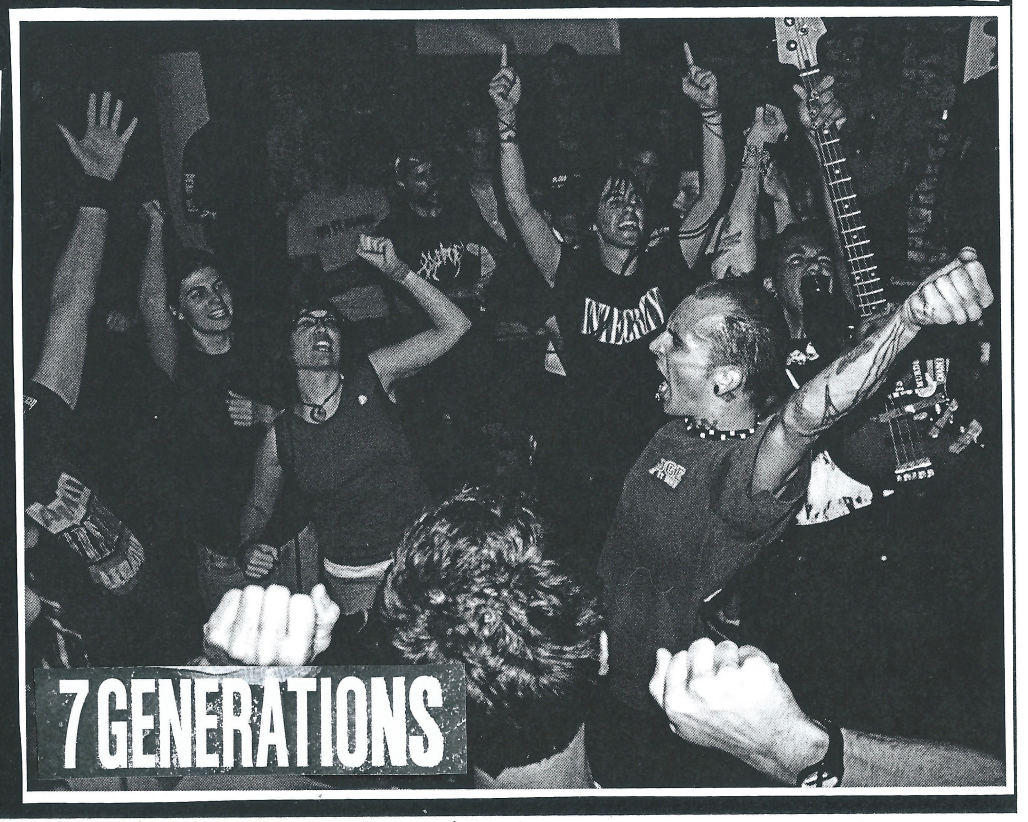

UNBROKEN

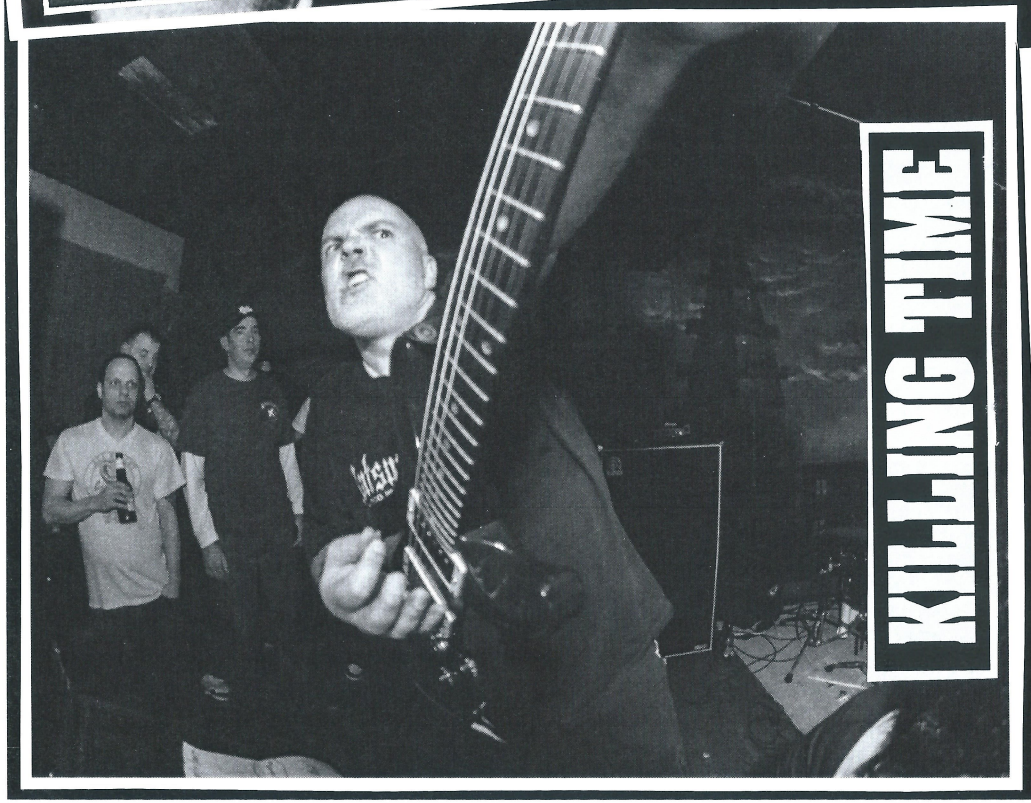
YOUTH OF
TODAY

foundation


7 GENERATIONS

H2O

Reach the Sky


KILLING TIME

SHAI HULUD

Culture

I first came across Culture around 1995, when metallic vegan straight edge was all the rage. I'm pretty sure I ordered the Deforestation 7" from the Very catalog, based on the description. Although I'm not the biggest metal fan, I liked the Slayer inspired riffs. Shortly after, I got the Born of You cd. I saw them a few times in the late 90s, but they ended up fading away. A few years ago, Culture started playing the occasional reunion show. When they got announced for This is Hardcore 2014, I was stoked I would be able to see them one more time. I realize Culture doesn't exactly fit the style of bands I normally include in the zine, but over the years I've found Damien's lyrics to be relatable and interviews to be interesting. I sent him a message asking if he'd be down for an interview, and here it is.

What was your first exposure to punk and hardcore? (It's a cliché question, but like in the northeast it was pretty easy to stumble into, and the west coast had the heavy influence from skating. Florida seems a little distant from all that. For me, I came from a broken home. My mother and I moved away from where I grew up. I never felt like I fit in with the kids in my new school. Once I found skating and punk, it gave me belonging and was something I could identify with.)
Already being into metal in the later years of elementary school and into middle school, I guess the propensity for counter-cultural music was already there. I'd been aware of punk from a distance -- seeing studded, mohawked gang members in cheesy 80s movies, for example -- but wasn't really sure where it lived in the overall heavy/offensive music landscape. I remember watching some British show on PBS with my parents, and there was a scene that took place in some seedy underground bar, and there was this band playing inside a fenced-in cage, all spiked and mohawked and leathery, and I fucking loved it. The punk "starter kit" was pretty easy to come by, since I constantly had my face buried in metal magazines, and there'd be mentions of the basics: Sex Pistols, Dead Kennedys, Exploited and the like. So I picked up on those bands pretty quickly (especially Exploited.)

But, like metal, punk still felt kind of un-relatable to me as a 7th grader. Too much pomp. Too much costume. Metal failed me lyrically, as a young naturalist, with all of its fantastic, supernatural elements, and the punk I'd found was either addressing issues that didn't resonate with me as an American, or were socially and politically over my head. Eventually, I found patterns in Thank You lists that made me aware of a gaggle of bands that didn't seem to be metal OR punk, but somehow tangentially related to both. I took note. I somehow ended up with a Minor Threat cassette, and the accessibility and relatability of the lyrics struck me immediately. It was everything I'd been missing, as a suburban, middle-class white kid who wasn't in the business of slaying dragons or squatting in London. It was for me. From there, Corrosion of Conformity, Agnostic Front, Sick of it All, the NYHC "The Way It Is" comp, 7-Seconds, etc.

You weren't the original singer for Culture. How did you end up joining the band?
I had the 4-song demo that Rich Thurston sang on (he also played all the guitars and bass on it, with Josh Williams on drums), and absolutely loved it. It sounded super fresh and evolved. Gut-wrenching and raw in an Inside Out sort of way, but with this very 90s, rhythmic quality that felt almost Helmet-y. After that recording, Rich decided he wanted to focus on playing guitar, and John Wylie had been recruited for second guitar. John and I knew each other, and he asked me to come try out. I'd been in a couple of smaller local bands by then, but none that had recorded. So I tried out, and that was that.

Were you in any bands before? I know you have had your hands in a ton of bands since.
Yeah, the first band I was in was a punk band called U.S. Decline. Never played or recorded with them, but it gave me the bug. I moved away for a bit, and they went on to record a killer demo and play pretty regularly with the new singer. After that I did a band called Insist, with whom I played my first shows ever. When we disbanded, half of us started a band with half of the also-newly-defunct Organized Pain (John Wylie's band prior to him joining Culture -- he was not in the half that stayed), and we formed Reach, who played a couple of shows and promptly split up. I had just started a band called Handoverfist when the call from Culture came, so that quickly fizzled and the rest is messy history.

South Florida has a distinct sound, metallic Hardcore, with some Slayer worship. Why do you think that was the case?
Not sure. It probably had a lot to do with Florida's position as the death metal capital, and most of our backgrounds being rooted in metal, where in other regions kids might have been weaned on some form of punk or hardcore from the start. We, by and large, were not. So, the roots show through. We had Timescape Zero in Miami who had a very mid-tempo thrash quality to their hardcore. Orlando had Bloodlet, who were even closer to the epicenter of death metal, and no doubt more shaped by it. But I think that specific Slayer-y strain of South Florida hardcore can be directly traced back to Culture. Morning Again built on that sound, and then we saw a succession of bands like Poison the Well spring from that same well (pun intended.) So, if you had to blame/ accredit anyone, I'd point to Rich and John.

I wanna talk about two things regarding Momento Mori. First, at the 1997 Syracuse fest, Culture played that song and filmed it, maybe for a video. What was the catalyst behind it? I don't mean why is hunting bad. Where I'm from, hunting is a big deal, so much so that schools are closed on the first day of hunting season (deer.) And did you get a lot of grief because the lyrics were so militant.
Not sure what happened to that live footage. If memory serves, we played a full set the day before, then played one of two songs on Hatebreed's gear the next day for video/photo purposes. Something like that.

As far as the song itself, it was really about trophy hunting. Living in Michigan has certainly given me some new perspective on the conservation aspects of hunting, but yeah -- in Miami there wasn't a whole lot of exposure to it, so I definitely wouldn't say the song was a reaction to any sort of local hunting culture. I never got any condemnation for the militance of the lyrics, despite probably deserving some grief.

MY EGO

MY SENSELESS EGO

HAS BECOME

MY DEMISE

culture

culture

THIS IS A CALL TO ARMS BUT YOU REFUSE TO GROW

One Culture song that has always been in the back of my head is Apologies. Throughout my life, there have been internal struggles, especially when I reflect on things I've said or done that I shouldn't have.
Same. And that's the general gist of the song -- Not just the part about wishing you'd handled things better, but the frustration of feeling like you never seem to learn from those mistakes, and keep fucking up in the same ways. Early Culture was great in that sense... All songs were personal and miserable. It was a great outlet for self-loathing, before we morphed into, in many ways, the polar opposite: A platform for self-righteous ideology. No regrets about either phase, but the early shit is what grabbed me, as a fan, long before joining.

Musically, Culture remained fairly consistent throughout its existence, however the lyrics and style evolved over time.
Yeah, the lyrics definitely made that shift from introspective and personal to dogmatic and critical. Inward-facing to outward, you might say. I notice differences in the music, with the biggest jump happening when Steve Looker joined and started handling a lot of the writing. At that point, a lot of the fat was trimmed... Slow, clean parts were sort of done away with, and I think we generally got a bit more chuggy and direct. But, yes, for the most part, Culture always sounded like Culture, despite changes in songwriter, vocal approach and never, EVER getting a good recording.

Oath is a very powerful song. I don't honestly care who is straight edge and who isn't anymore. However, occasionally I am curious as to the thoughts behind the change. This question isn't to attack or anything along those lines. I just like personal stuff, seeing behind the curtain a little.
The details are pretty inconsequential. All I can say is that it was not, as it seems to be for many people, anything I'd been thinking about or considering prior to doing so. It was pretty sudden, and happened at a time in my life where I was emotionally a bit "off" to say the least. I wasn't one of those straight edge kids who'd never had any history of alcohol or drug abuse, so in many ways it was just a return from whence I came. Not all that exciting.

How did you end up singing on the first Morning Again record? (Again, not interested in controversy if there is some. I'm honestly curious. Remember life before the internet and everyone wasn't in everyone else's business. I just knew there was "a new band with Damien from Culture" so I quickly scooped it up.)
In early 1995 I left Culture (I'd return in late 96/early 97), in many ways due to ideological clashes with John Wylie. Soon after leaving, I quickly got busy getting Shai Hulud off the ground with Matt Fox, and I guess around that time John left Culture himself. He'd started playing with some guys, and wasn't into the singer for reasons I don't recall, so he called me to make amends for whatever past tension and to invite me to sing for his new project. I agreed, on the condition that this new band would not espouse a vegan or straight edge agenda, despite all members subscribing to those lifestyles. I wanted to focus on issues that I felt were underrepresented in that heavier, metallic slice of hardcore, and felt that hanging a band's entire identity on two well-worn issues was myopic and masturbatory. Eventually, after my departure, Morning Again would start plastering X's all over their shit, and quickly went back to being known as a vegan straight edge band.

MY GOAL IS REVOLUTION

REVOLT!

Talk about the end of the band. Was it a gradual thing, or did everyone decide that was it? I don't remember a lot of fanfare about it, almost like Culture had become an afterthought.

When I returned to the band, the lineup was essentially the same as when I left, with the exception of Steve Looker playing in place of John Wylie. Gordon, Rich and Josh were all still there, and I was friends with Steve, anyway. Culture was still very much Culture. That was I guess late in 1996. Josh quit before our first European tour in the Fall of 1997, and almost immediately after that tour everything changed. A few months later, Rich had moved out of the state, Steve had gone on to Morning Again. Gordon, Steve and I continued cobbling together a lineup. Tim Kirkpatrick, who'd been the drummer of Roosevelt (a band Culture had done a split 7" with years earlier) joined. Steve went over to Morning Again, and Joe Simmons joined upon learning that it was his spot Steve was taking in Morning Again. Gordon left, Floyd joined, etc, etc.. The point is, the band had become unrecognizable. We did another European tour, I got shitfaced, The End.

Did you remain in contact with the guys in the band?

From the "Born of You" lineup, not really. John and I still kept in touch a bit, and he'd book shows for us (As Friends Rust) in the years that followed. Rich and I went nearly 15 years without speaking. Josh basically disappeared. Gordon briefly played in the first re-incarnation of As Friends Rust following Culture's split, but then we lost touch. But Joe and Tim, who'd been in that last "unrecognizable" 1998 lineup of Culture, both ended up in AFR.

You did As Friends Rust shortly after. Why did you end up in a band so quickly?

As Friends Rust was a band I was doing while in Morning Again and Bird of Ill Omen (1996) but broke up very quickly. The guys in Culture loved the demo AFR had recorded, and wanted to start up a new version of AFR. I got the original members' blessings, and when the final lineup of Culture (1998) ended, we sort of just started playing those songs.

What did you think when people started contacting the band about playing some reunion shows?

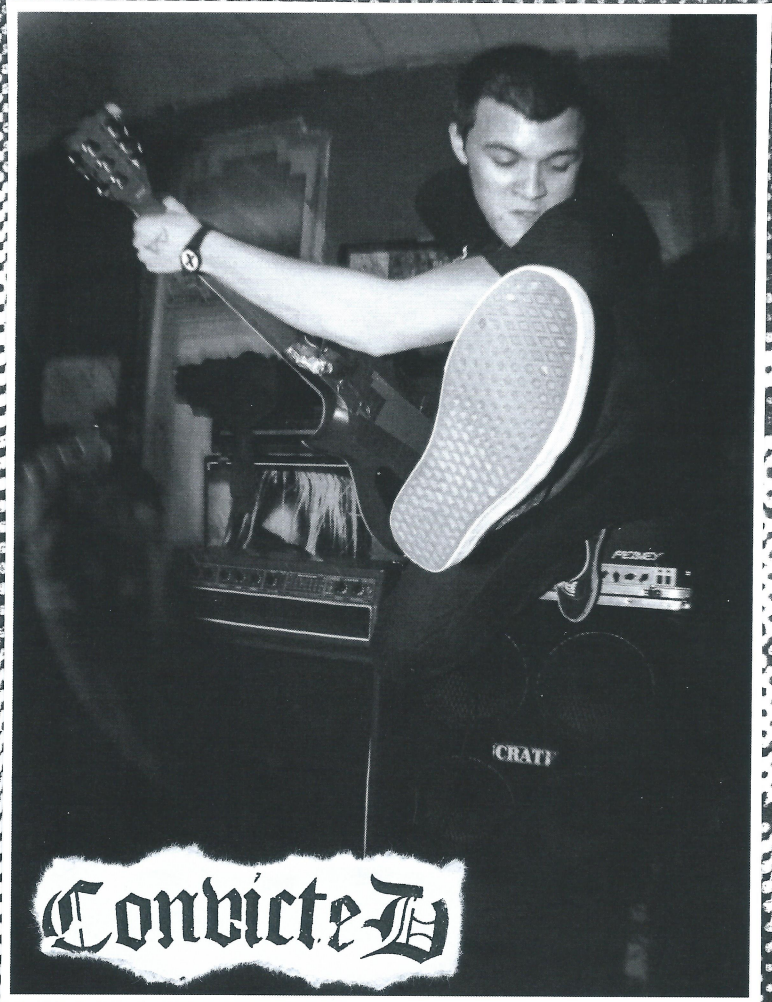
I thought, "Well, that's just impossible." Several of us don't observe the same lifestyles we did when younger, as often happens, and for a band that became known for those lifestyle choices, I didn't see the point in taking the stage again. But other reunions were painting a different picture -- one in which a band could just get up there, play songs that are still parts of their DNA and relive their experiences together, regardless. One where people could see a band they hadn't seen in ages, if ever, and be transported back in time. People seemed excited to see us, so we played for them. And having an excuse to get together with old friends after so many years estranged from one another is pretty fucking cool.

You live in Michigan now. How did you end up there, and what are you up to now?

I needed to get out of Florida, and was dating a girl from Michigan. Despite knowing that relationship was doomed, I saw it as a way to get out of a dead-end job in an expensive, sweltering city (Miami), so I went with it. Once that fizzled, I landed a killer job, made some great friends and met my (now) wife. Been here for just over ten years now, and have grown to love it. It's definitely home. I work as an Industrial/Product Designer, and still keep pretty busy with music. As you've mentioned, Culture's done a bunch of shows since 2012, both here and in Japan and Europe, as has As Friends Rust. Rich and I have been doing a new hardcore band called On Bodies that's released a few records and also done some touring, and I have a solo project called Damien Done that released a couple of records last year, and is now chipping away at a full length. I also (along with a friend) run a silly, parody t-shirt brand called Dinner.

Anything else you'd want to talk about?

Nah. Just... Thanks so much for the interview, and people should check out Damien Done.


CRATE
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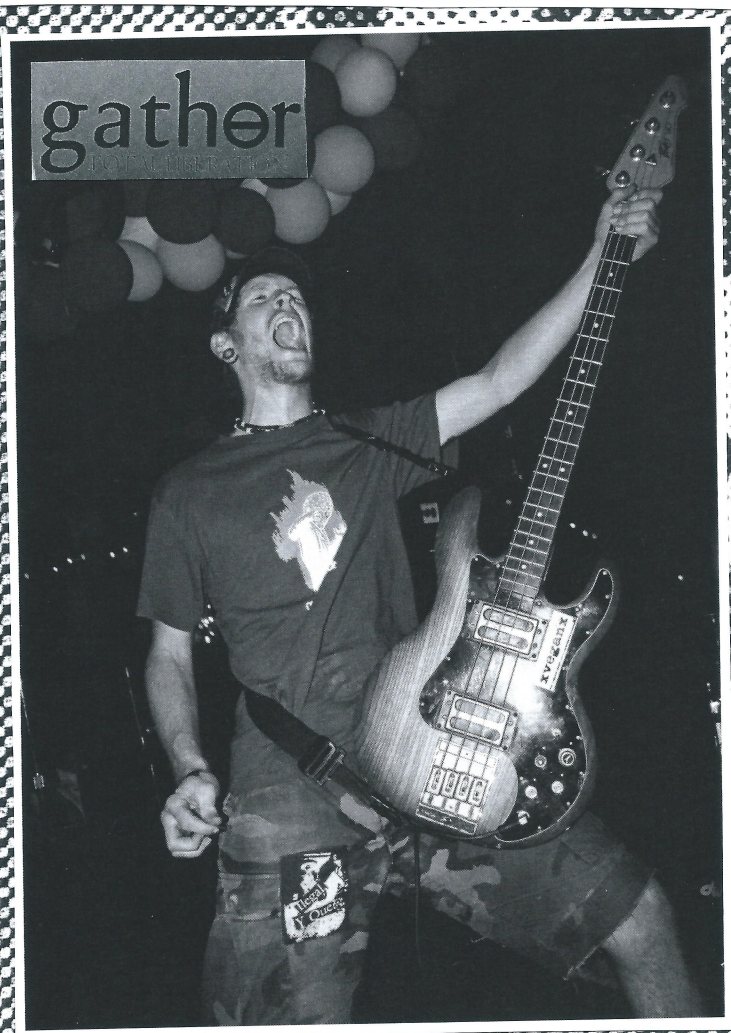
FORCE FED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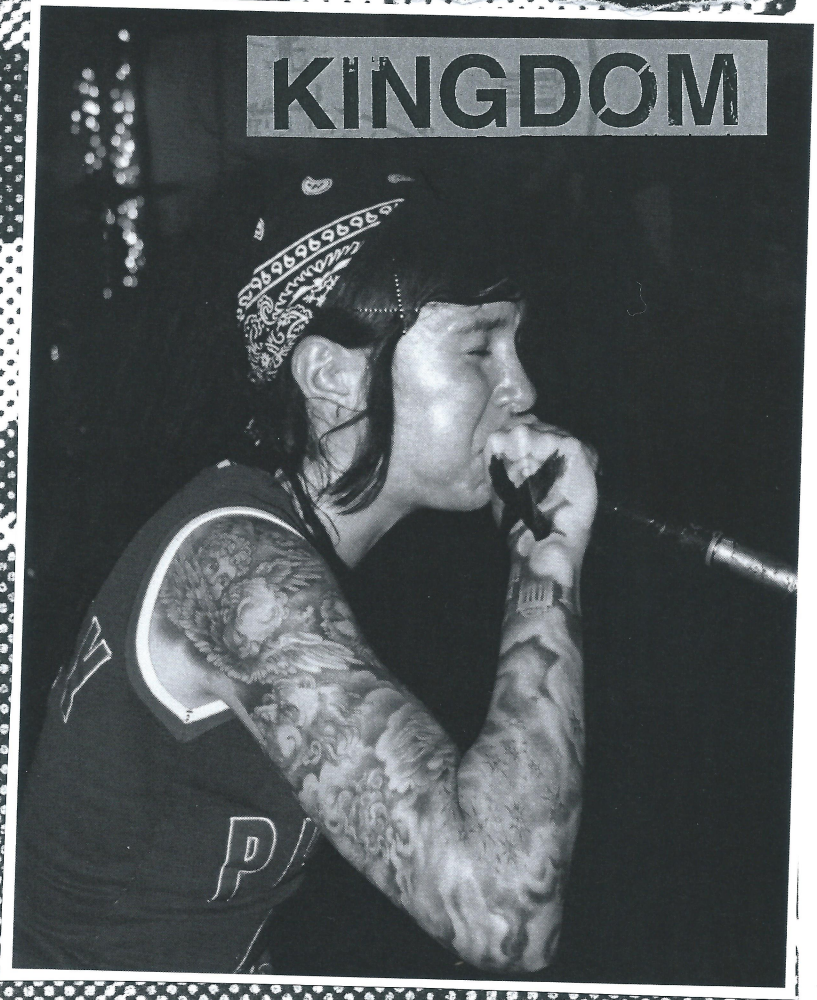

KINGDOM

EARTH CRISIS

PROJECT X

THE FIRST STEP

FORCED ORDER

REACT! RECORDS
STRAIGHT EDGE
MINDSET

HAVE
HEART

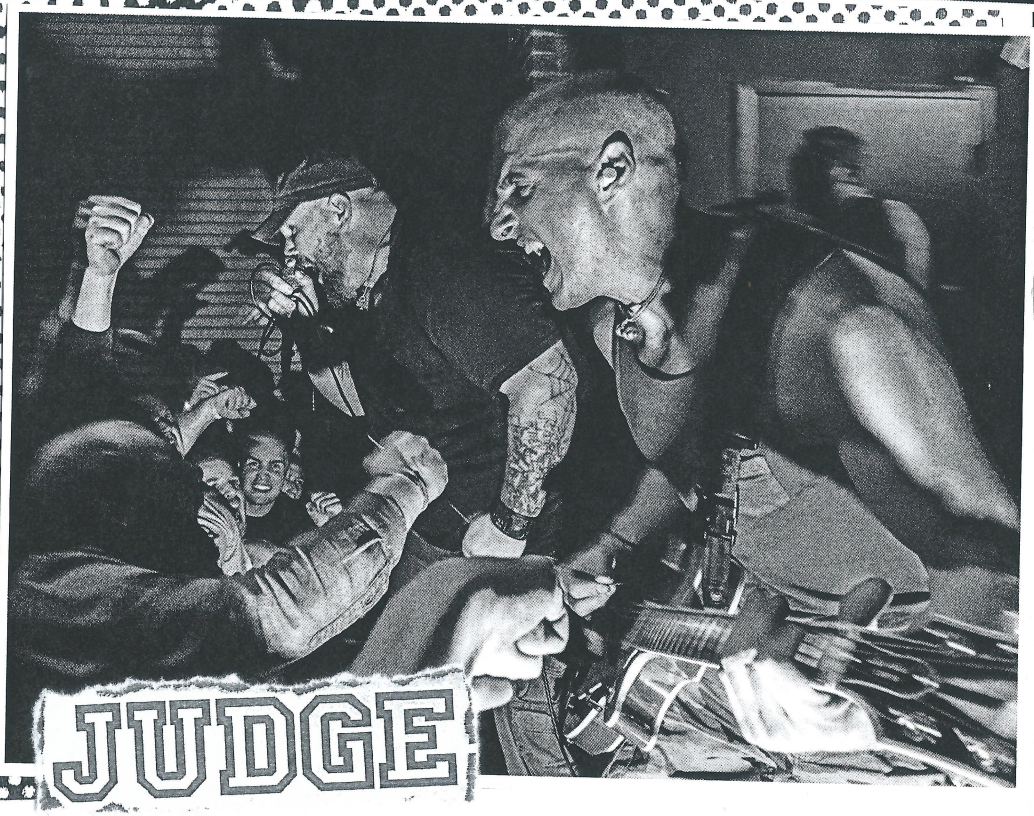
HOUNDS
OF HATE

BREAKTHROUGH
INSTED

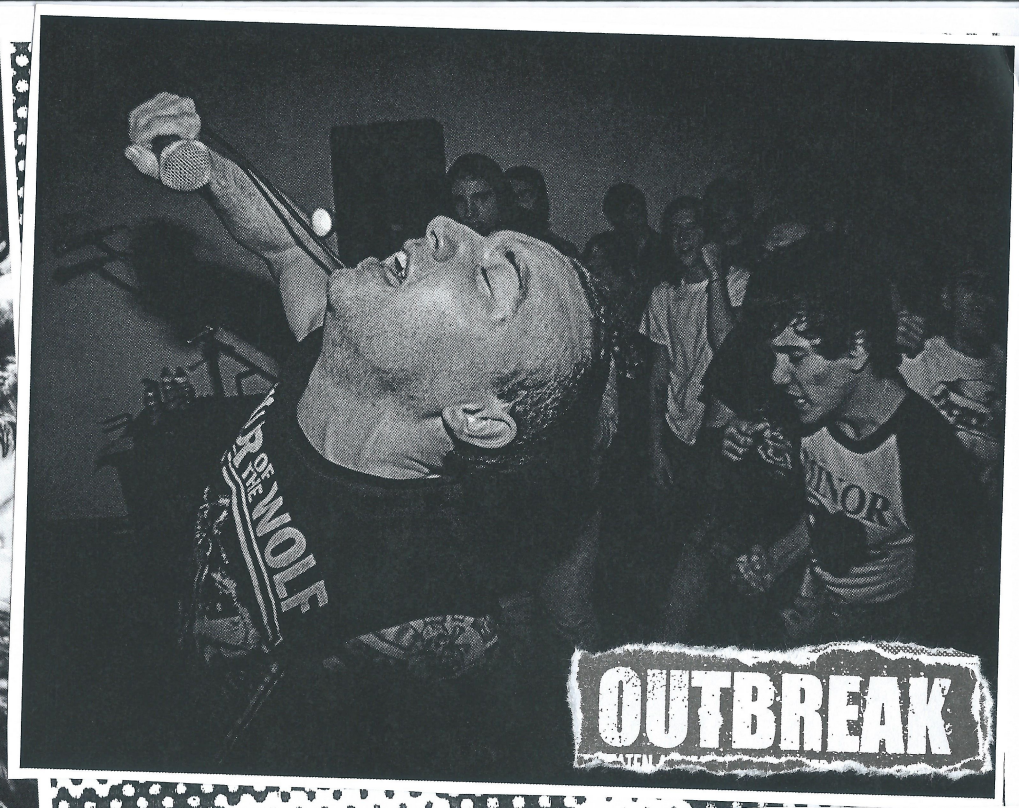
SPUDS

ONE UP

Lion Of Judah


JUDGE

American Nightmare


OUTBREAK

KILLING TIME

TURNSTILE

AGNOSTIC FRONT

One of the first hardcore records I can remember hearing was Victim in Pain. That record helped introduce me to a lot of other hardcore bands. Live at CBGB is considered a classic, with one of the most iconic covers in hardcore history. When I was coming up with ideas for this new issue, I thought I'd reach out to Roger Miret and try to get a little background on that record. Roger couldn't remember a whole lot about the circumstances surrounding the record, and next thing I knew, I was setting up an interview. I wanted this to be a little different than a normal band interview, because Roger is a huge Misfits fan and wanted to talk about some of his memories from seeing them, as well as some record talk. I did this interview before a show in Pittsburgh on September 29, 2017. Roger was one of the nicest and easiest people I've ever got to interview. We spent about 20 minutes talking about life and records before the actual interview started. Hope you enjoy this, because I certainly did.

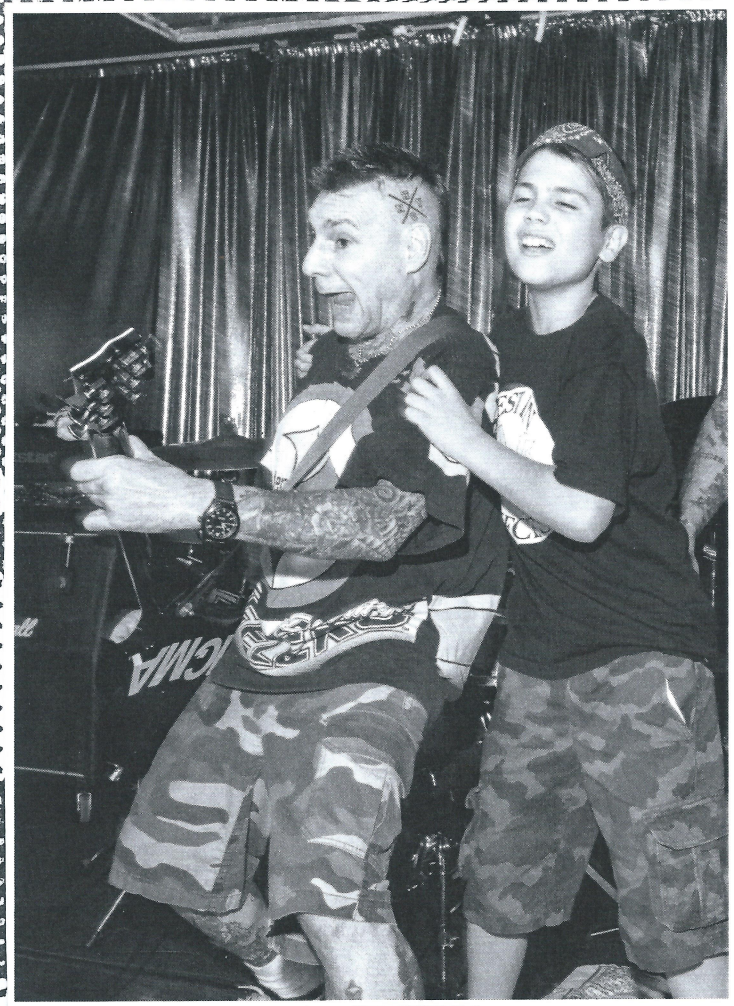
Did Agnostic Front ever play with The Misfits?
Yeah. Well we played with the later Misfits. Never played with the earlier Misfits. Unfortunately no. They had broken up around the time I joined Agnostic Front, or really shortly after. I remember the last time I saw them, it was with Tar Babies and Rosemary's Babies. DYS didn't play. That was the last time I saw them. I remember they left Gildersleeves because they were pissed off. It wasn't a very good show. Even attendance wise it wasn't a good show. It was a mess.

They didn't draw a lot back then, did they?
No. Not really. But there wasn't many of us back then so you can't really blame them. The scene was what it was, ya know? There wasn't many of us to draw what you'd think. A great show was like 100 people anywhere.

I think there is an imagination that all these shows were huge. Maybe because it was in New York?
I think shows in general got bigger just about when they stopped. When Samhain kicked in, shows were big. That was a whole different era. More people were coming to shows. It was a little bit more acceptable.

Crossover probably helped with that.
Yeah that. College radio started coming into play. They started playing a lot more underground punk. Everything changed just about when they broke up.

Did The Misfits hang out at shows and around town, or was it just like in and out?
They'd hang out. They'd hang out even not at shows. I'd see them on 8th Street. Everyone would hang out there. On stoops, in stores. Trash and Vaudeville, St. Marks. Glenn was a nice guy. Approachable. No one really had attitudes. Even when they played, they were approachable. Jerry was a nice guy. To this day, Jerry is still a nice guy. Doyle too. I never got an attitude from any of them. You'll hear them say at times that they were never really accepted in the New York scene. The New York scene was always a little cliquey, I'll give it to them for saying that. They think they weren't, but I think they were. Whether there was a show or not, hanging out was always cool.



This is kind of dumb, and you may not even remember, but what was their merch set up like? Did they have those crimson ghost standups or anything cool like that?
I don't remember seeing anything but records.
I don't remember seeing t-shirts.

Were they selling the in venue or outside?
In the venue. They'd have a little thing set up. I remember seeing 7"s for sure. Some copies of Walk Among Us, maybe. Earth AD didn't come out until after they broke up anyway. The crimson ghost displays were only at record stores. Glenn took them to Venus, Sounds, or wherever the hell they were. I'm trying to think who would have even sold their stuff. Who would have been with them. They were playing and all that stuff. Back then, even when we would sell stuff, we'd sell it off the stage. We normally only had one or two t-shirts and our 7", if that. I think a lot of their stuff was so accessible at all the stores, they'd just show up and play.

Glenn would screen print a lot of promo stuff for the band, like the skeletal horsemen. Did you ever see things like that around the city?
The one I remember seeing a lot, and I talk about it in my book, I remember coming out of the A7 with Jimmy Gestapo and saw Glenn. He had a shopping cart and wheat paste. He was plastering the 3 Hits from Hell posters everywhere. He gave me and Jimmy one each. It was early man. We were just getting out of A7. We were like "what is he doing here?" A7 would close at like 5-6 in the morning. And here he is with a shopping cart, wheat pasting shit.

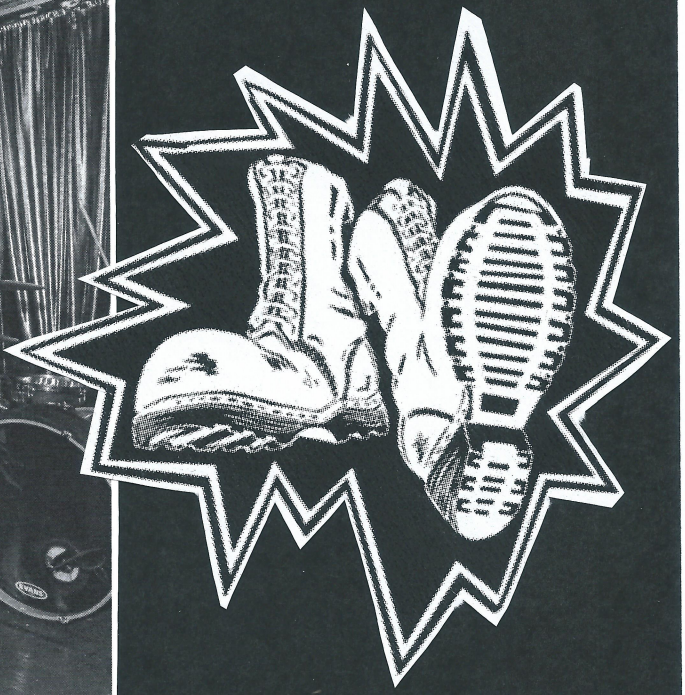
Was he dressed like Glenn or did he just look like a normal guy?
He was dressed like Glenn. Nobody dressed like a normal guy then. What they looked like, they looked like, with the exception of Jerry and Doyle. They didn't really walk around like that all the time. But Glenn was pretty much the way he is.

My friends and I were in New Jersey for Wrestlemania a few years ago. It was outside and was going to be a rainy, cold day. We thought it would be a good idea to pick up a little more clothing. We turned on the GPS and we found a K-Mart nearby and started driving toward it. Turns out it was in Lodi! I was disappointed though. I was expecting it to look like Transylvania, but it was just a regular town in New Jersey.
Yeah it's just a normal town. Their one song, 138, that's the exit of the parkway in Lodi. A lot of people were like "what does that mean?"

You mentioned shows at A7 running late. Now shows start around 7 or 10. The NYHC book talks about how shows would start at like 2 in the morning.
A7 was awesome. It was really our club. A lot of people talk about CBGB, but to me the real scene, especially the beginning of hardcore, when it was just starting to shift, was the A7 club. Like you said, normally shows wouldn't start til 1, 2, 3 in the morning. They wouldn't be done until like 5:30-6. It ran into the afterhours.

Was there something else going on at A7 that cause shows to start that late, or what that just kinda how it was?
It's just when it started. It wasn't always just punk shows. There were reggae shows happening there too. Dave, the guy who ran it, was big on reggae too. What was cool about it is it was just a door. You'd knock and go in. Just you going there, you were accepted. It took a lot for anybody to go to a show in the middle of a warzone. It was always welcoming. The scene didn't start getting big, going back to The Misfits, until CBGB started doing more shows, especially when the matinee era came. Then it became easier and with that, it grew. Now you didn't have to go out at 2 in the morning to a show, because you couldn't as a teenager. Your mom would be like "where the fuck you been?" Now you can tell your mom "hey I'm gonna go with my friends" and go to a hardcore show that starts at like 1 in the afternoon, done by 6 and be home in time for dinner. She never knew you went to New York City! It was all lit, the elements of danger wasn't there. As soon as people started going to those shows, they started meeting other people and started to gravitate towards A7 at night because they'd already made friends. They felt safer going there. That's kinda what happened. That's when the scene really started blowing up. That's also when The Misfits started blowing up. It was still in the bowery, still a bad area. When we played with GBH at Great Gildersleeves, there were maybe 200 people and that was a lot. It was a big show. The show The Misfits played with Tar Babies and Rosemary's Baby, DYS was supposed to play. Everyone was hyped up. At the time, all that stuff started to get popular, but there weren't a lot of people at those shows.

A7, that was at the edge of Alphabet City, right?
Yeah it was. I refused to go into the A7 Club until about 6-7 years ago. Drew was doing that movie, The New York Hardcore Chronicles, and had me meet him by A7. He was kinda like "ok, we are going to go in." I hadn't been in there since they closed their doors. Agnostic Front was the last band to play there. Even though my friend Jesse owns it, I would never go in. I wanted to keep my memories. It was really weird going back in there.



So the punk thing was happening at CBs with Blondie, The Ramones and those bands. You'd go to those shows I'm sure, but the bands around A7 created something new. The road wasn't already paved for you. How did that happen?

If I have to give credit to any band for the newer, younger hardcore band, I'd have to give credit to The Stimulators. They were THE New York band. I loved them. I always adored them. I loved watching them. Once the Bad Brains came to New York, they introduced a whole new style. They changed a lot of things. But if it wasn't for The Stimulators and the Bad Brains, these things wouldn't have happened. One thing started rolling into another.

I hate even saying it like this, because it's so cliché, but at that time of your life were you just so aggro and full of rage that it was pretty much organic? Like now it's easy to go "I wanna sound like..." and just pick up the formula.

That's easy like you said.

How do you create from nothing? That's what I love about bands like The Misfits or Minor Threat. It's something you take for granted right now, but at the time, it didn't exist. There was no blueprint. How do you create that?

Everybody sounded so different. Everybody had their unique sound, which is incredible. Unique band names. Unique everything. For me, with Agnostic Front and being close to New York, there was this element of danger. It helped create this vibe. The way everything was in the lower east side; as unsafe as it was, it also felt safe. As ugly as it was, great art and great bands came out of it. Think about it- Andy Warhol, Blondie, Talking Heads, Ramones. Then you go into The Stimulators, Beastie Boys, Bad Brains, The Misfits. It was our answer to who we wanted to be. The whole time I was growing up, I was confused. I didn't know where I fit in. It was a little different for me, because I'd move every six months. I came from pure poverty. I never felt comfortable or accepted anywhere or by anybody. I was always a little reserved because of that. When I met this crowd of misfits, rebels, and hooligans, I felt at home. If you think about how crazy it was, it didn't feel that way. Now when I go back and look at the areas I grew up in, I realize it was bad ghetto. Back then, I was with my family. I felt protected. I felt ok. It was the ghetto. That's how it was in New York City with the music too. It was the ghetto, but I felt with our tribe together, I felt safe.

AGNOSTIC FRONT

It was dangerous outside the building, outside your circle. But at the shows, while chaotic and crazy, there was also a sense of safety. Now the fear at shows is some asshole is going to gopher punch you or run along the edge of the pit just punching people who are watching the show. It's not being sketchy or hard, it's being a bully. You were dealing with real shit in the lower east side outside those doors.

It was a complete different fear of danger. We had to be a tribe, live together. When I talk about unity, this is where it all comes from. We had to unite. We had to stick together. We had to be one. We had to battle the outside with each other. The danger wasn't within. It was exterior. We'd come together to deal with these challenges.

I'm not trying to define hardcore. But it wasn't about showing how tough you were to everyone else in the room.

I get you. I know where you're going and I totally understand.

I realize things like that do happen. But sometimes people get these ideas in their head that certain behaviors or actions have to happen to validate how hard or committed you are. And if that's not your thing you are a poser or pussy.

We never enacted violence toward each other. Once in a while, things would get out of hand and you'd have to deal with it. It's sadder today to be honest. It changed. Let's take it from the straight edge movement. Ian MacKaye was like "don't smoke, don't drink, don't fuck. Those were the only 3 rules. Now there's probably like 20 other rules that go with it now. It was straight edge, vegan straight edge, this kind of straight edge. It started getting all crazy. Same thing with punk and hardcore. I always tell people I never looked at Victim in Pain as a hardcore record, to me it was a punk record. We were a bunch of punks. People started to call it a hardcore record, I thought they meant hardcore punk. To me it's a punk record. I think Minor Threat is a punk band.

That's the way I saw it too. I grew up in a small town. I read Thrasher and MRR. I would define the bands. I didn't care about sub-genres. I used the term punk generically. Pretty much if most of the kids at school didn't want to listen to it and would make fun of me for doing so, it was punk. I didn't differentiate between Fugazi, Gorilla Biscuits, or JFA. It was all the same to me, with some differences in sound.

It was aggressive, alternative music to me. It was punk. Then things started changing. People started building walls. You have to divide those walls. It's really crazy.

How has Agnostic Front managed to survive this long. The band started in 1982, and we are sitting here doing an interview before a show in 2017.
The truth is, there have been a lot of ups and downs. There's been a lot of different members. I went to prison. A lot has happened during that time. I think the secret to a lot of people liking us or gravitating to us, or our legacy or longevity, is that we are genuine people. People can approach us. They don't feel that they can't. Once they do meet us, they feel it's genuine. No one wants to be part of something that isn't genuine.

Live at CBGB, was that released just to fulfil a recording contract?
I was in prison when it came out. They sent me the cover and cassette because I couldn't have vinyl in jail. It's the only AF record I don't have a test press of. I'm pissed off about it! I don't have the long box either. It was recorded in 1988. I remember the trucks being outside. I don't know why they had trucks, CBs was recording live shows. It wasn't filler. It was something they really wanted to do. I've always said Agnostic Front has never been a studio band. I still stand by that. We've always been a live band. They wanted to capture Agnostic Front live. That was recorded before the Anthem video. It's the equivalent to the Peter Frampton Live record in the rock world. That is the biggest live punk record.

You have a wife and kids. How is it being on the road, away from your family a lot?
I miss my kids a lot. I'm gonna tell you something. My oldest, my daughter Nadia, the one I had with Amy from Nausea, that was the hardest ever. She was born in 1987. I was on the road. I got incarcerated in 1989, got out in 1991 and went back on the road. She was still a little girl. Think about this. We had no internet. It was hard. I remember coming back from tour in Europe. I had sent her postcards. I'd get home and receive those postcards. The first one, like six months later. It's a little easier now. It's ok because I can see my kids every day. It makes it easier but I still want to be with them. The problem now is I'm older and I want them to see a lot of stuff. Not even the shows, it doesn't really matter. Sometimes it's not appropriate to bring them to shows

Unlike bringing your brother when he was 7, right?
Yeah, exactly! What the hell was I thinking? Haha. But sometimes I feel like they are missing out on things I see. I'll think "I really want to have that experience with my family" so I'll wait until next time. My daughter loves Reagan Youth, I do too. My son likes The Misfits. My other daughter likes the colors. My pink Initium is her favorite. She's standing there with it. I'm like "don't drop it!" My son likes red. So she's got the pink one, he has the red.

You're into cars. Isn't it hard having a nice city? Where would you keep it?
I didn't have a nice car in the city, that's why I had to move.
You don't live in the city anymore?
Nah. I lived in Arizona for the last 11 years. I thought you knew that.
I don't know anything! You were in the Rumblers when you were in NYC, right?
I was. I had my '32. It was a little rougher. More like a giant go-kart in the city, which was fun. I had my '50 which I barley took out. I was always worried about cabs or something stupid happening to it. I wasn't comfortable with it. It was expensive. Just storing it in my garage in Brooklyn at the time was around $800 a month plus my own regular rent. When I moved to Arizona, I sold all the cars. I took my '32 to one of my brothers in Italy who still has it. I bought a '54. I worked on it for many years, now it's finished. I have a 2 car garage. It's different!

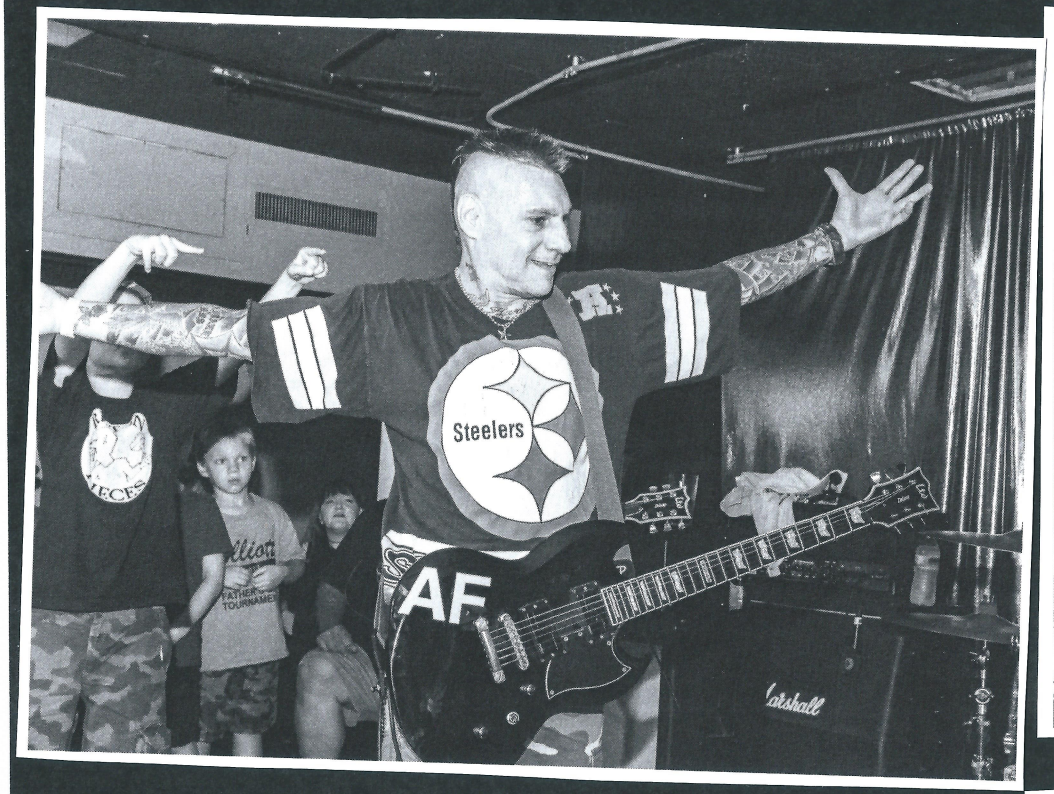
AGNOSTIC FRONT

What was it like writing a book?
That was the hardest thing I've ever done. I started this book in 1998 or 1999 with Lars Fredericksen. We were in the studio and he was like "man you have to do a book. We're gonna start right now." I started it. I don't type- I hate typing. I was like "let's talk." You want to do an interview, call me. I ain't typing nothing. I started talking into a cassette player. I did all that, then realized I had a bunch of stuff that needed to be typed. I was thinking "fuck what am I going to do?" So I started doing production work in the studio for bands. And in exchange, they'd type my shit out. I had them on floppy disks. I had stories now. When 9/11 happened, I had my laptop hooked up to my regular computer. A virus wiped everything out. I started all over again. This time I used that Naturally Speaking Dragon program. I had to teach it my voice. I have a weird accent because I was born in Cuba. I had to learn how to speak English here. Plus I have that New York combination Spanish thing. It was a nightmare teaching this machine to listen to me. I did that and lost it again with another virus. I switched to Macs in 2006. My wife attempted to help me. She said this is too much. Steve Psycho attempted to help me. When we started to film, I had everything. He said "let me see what you got. Wow, this in incredible. I have a friend who can help you edit and put this all together." He sent it to him. The guy called me right away and said it was great. I want to help you put it out. There is a pride thing here, I wanted to do it by myself. Fast forward 3 years go by- life, kids, 2 bands/ 3bands- have you heard of The Alligators? I love that band. We never played a show, no one has ever asked us to. Doing so much shit, traveling. I never continued. The guy hit me up again "hey, what's going on with your book? I want to see some more. Let me help you." I was like "fuck it, help me. At this point, I need help." I originally planned on ending at the Cause for Alarm era. He wanted to expand. He wanted to talk about this and that. We did and it filled in a lot of gaps. It's a whole story now. It's really cool. I'm glad it took this long. If i released it when I thought we were going to... if you look at the back of Riot Riot Upstart, it says "book coming out soon." Back then I was calling it Just Us and I thought it was going to be released in 2001-2002. It would have been a different book. I'm glad.

So what's the book about?
It's about my life. It's like 4 stories. It starts with an immigrant story. I was born in Cuba and came to America. My harsh upbringing of physical and mental abuse. Then transforming into the punk world. There are 3 or 4 cool Misfits stories in there and all the New York stories. It gets into that. Being in the scene, touring. Then it goes into my unfortunate all-expense paid government vacation, which I had to deal with. That was a pivoting change in the book. At that point I was all about myself and not realizing all the people I was fucking. I never thought about taking this package, which was drugs, I knew it was drugs, and taking it over there. I was like "ok this is easy money. It would get me $300 easy." I never thought past me taking it over there. It gets broken down. Who knows if there are any fatalities down the road? I wasn't clearly thinking. When I did, it was like "fuck." I changed. It changed the person. The beautiful thing about it all, well it's not beautiful I had to do time, I remember the benefit shows. A lot of my bands and peers, people who truly believed in Xing up, true straight edge kids, came in. They knew, they knew. Yet they still believed in me and believed in my band. The still loved me. They came together to benefits to help me out even though it was against their beliefs. That's how beautiful the scene is. All that really hit me when I was incarcerated. All the people I've hurt. My life changed. I came out a different person. A lot of great bands stepped up to the plate and did things for me. They could have easily said no, that's not what we believe, fuck you, whatever. That's the beauty of unity in hardcore and everything I've talked about. It's cool when you think about it. Think about all the bands that played that benefit show- Gorilla Biscuits, Sick of It All. There's so many bands. I think Bold and Youth of Today played. Bands that had their own honor to stick behind, stuck their necks out for me.

Where does the book end?
The book goes to current. Those are three really fascinating parts that people always want to know about. The last 48 pages are where I'm at today. It's a pretty good, full recap, even to where I am in Arizona.

Last words, closing thoughts?
Thank you for the many years of love and support of not only my band, but punk and hardcore in general.


Steelers
AF
Marshall

JBL

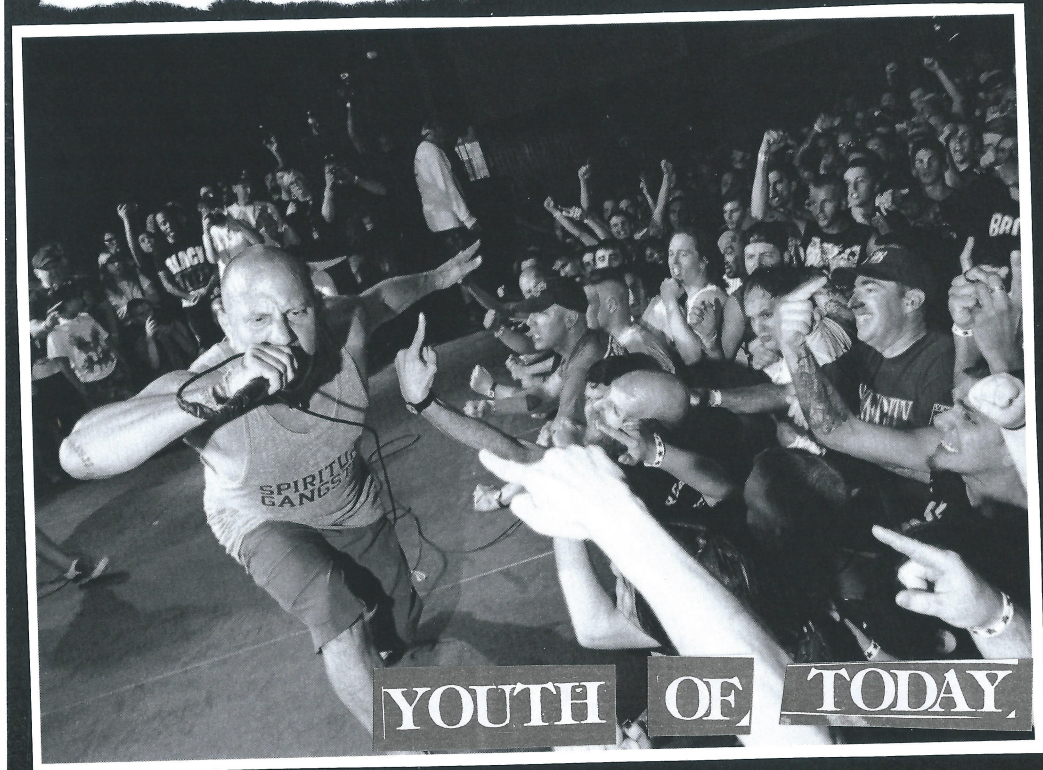
THIS MEANS WAR

MADBA

STIGMA
Steelers
STEELERS

SHAI HULUD

VERSE


YOUTH OF TODAY

STEP FORWARD
VIOLENT REACTION

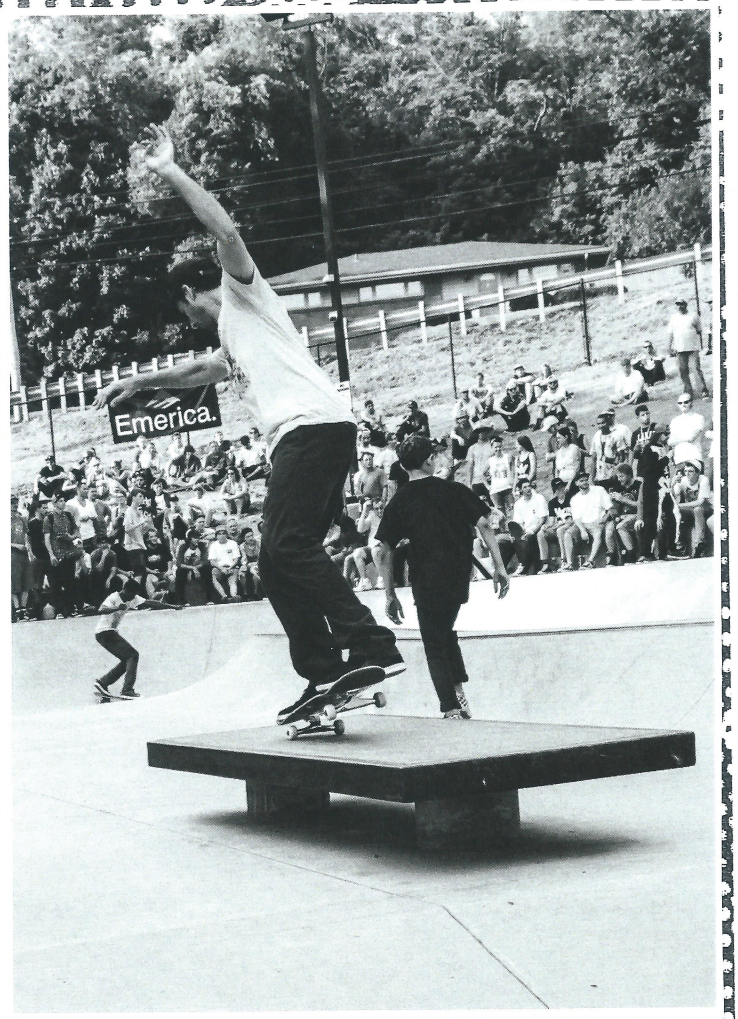
BOYSETSFIRE

foundation

COLD WORLD

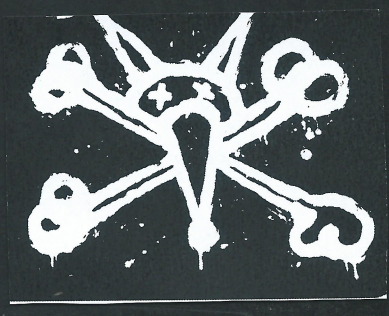
TRUE LOVE
ORANGE

Skateboarding or punk, it's like the chicken and the egg for me. Which came first? I discovered both around the same time, although I was way more into skateboarding at first. As I mentioned in an earlier issue, my parents split up after I finished 5th grade. I moved with my mom to a new town, and a new school. Everything about that area was different than where I grew up, so I had a really hard time adjusting. I made a few friends, but most of the time would rather do things on my own. Across town, there was an old grocery warehouse that housed several ramps, or so the rumor was. It was called the Banana House. I was so intimidated, yet intrigued at the same time. The outside of the brick building was covered with spray paint saying "skate or die" as well as the iconic Powell rat bones logo. Finally during the summer of 1988, I got the nerve to go inside. To me, it was the same as my first punk show. The walls were painted with current skateboard graphics, there was a few smaller ramps, a wall ride ramp, and a lime green mini ramp. The day before I went there for the first time, I spent the night before watching The Search for Animal Chin. I thought I would hit that ramp and bust out frontside airs and backside boneless ones. Yeah, that didn't happen. I was barely able to kickturn. At the end of the day, I knew that I had found my home. Unfortunately, later that year it was closed for good. There were a lot of street spots around town, and the occasional parking lot with a jump ramp or parking block. I spent every waking moment completely consumed with skateboarding. None of the other stuff mattered anymore, I was a skater! And I was determined to forge my own way, and do my own thing. Of course, not long after I really got into skating, the popularity began to decline and people stopped skating and the shops started closing. I can remember buying a lot of Powell and Santa Cruz stuff for dirt cheap from shops that were going out of business. During 8th grade, we had a little crew that skated together. There was an abandoned house near me that the burnouts used to drink and party in. We took it over and built some ramps inside so we'd have a place to go when the weather was bad. By the end of that year, I was skating alone again. I was in 9th grade when Public Domain came out and Ray Barbee blew everyone's mind. I was skating a parking block, thinking about all the weird tech tricks he would do. I fell over the block, extending my arms. When I hit the ground, my left elbow broke. I was laying on the ground with my arm bent the wrong way, waiting for an ambulance.



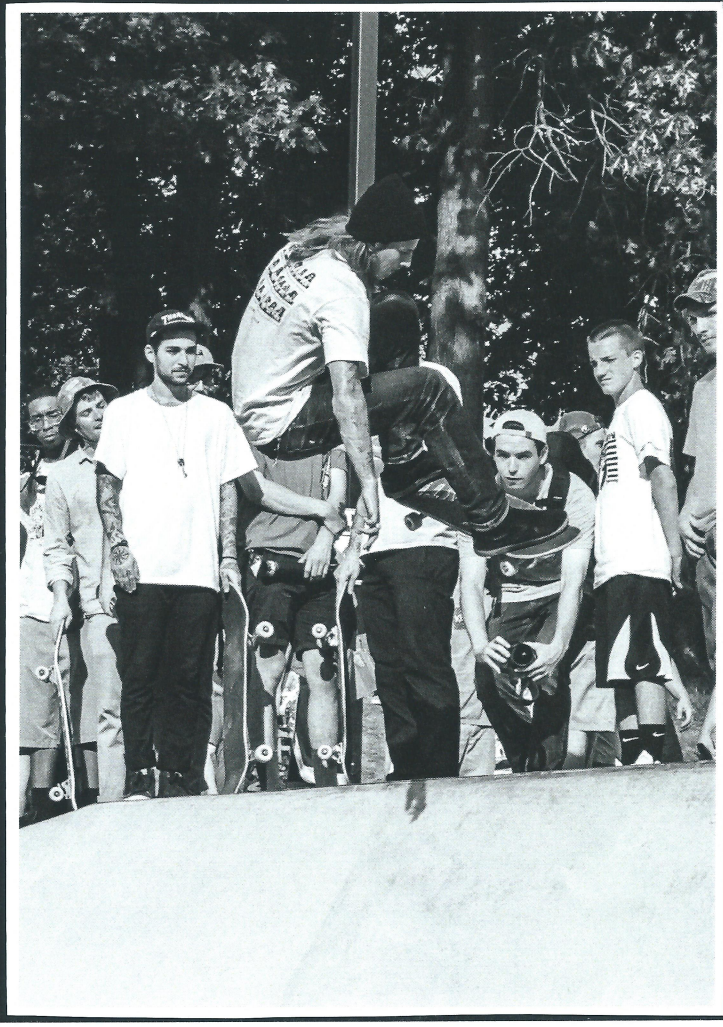
My friends Nate and Philip were with me. I remember them talking about who was going to get my board, while I kept thinking my parents were going to kill me and I would never be allowed to skate again. I ended up having surgery on my arm that night. The next morning my dad brought me my mail, which included a letter, stickers, and product poster from Powell Peralta. That awesome package lifted my spirits. I wound up with a bone infection and spent a good deal of that year in the hospital getting treatment. Before long, I was on my board again.

The next year I hooked up with a crew from the neighboring town. My friend Shawn's house, became the main hangout spot. We'd spend the evening watching Hocus Pocus or Video Days, then going out and skating the whole night, until heading back to his house to eat and sleep. That winter we got an idea that we needed to build a tiny mini ramp in one of his extra bedrooms. I was 15, Shawn was 14. We took his mom's car and headed out to boost some wood. We were sneaking in the dark because there were some people around in the area we were looking. We found a stack of 2X4s and grabbed them. The problem was they were frozen together. I can still hear the loud crack of the ice breaking echoing through the quiet night air. We loaded up and went back to Shawn's house. Feeling there was no reason to waste time, we started cutting the transitions around 3am. Over time, those guys grew out of skating and once again I was on my own.



By this time I was 16 and had a driver's license. That held a lot of possibility for me. For the most part, the industry was pretty much dead and barely anyone was skating. That never stopped us. From this point on, I spent a lot of time skating anywhere and everywhere in the Pittsburgh area. We'd sniff out any cool spot, park, ramp or ditch. Skateboarding itself had also just gone under major changes. The street revolution was happening, and a visionary named Steve Rocco was bringing ethnic diversity into a stale, homogenized scene. He forever changed skateboarding, for the better. Throughout high school, I had no interest in going to parties or social events. Those things would take me away from skating or seeing bands. I wasn't having that! As time went on, my focus slowly transitioned from skating to punk/hardcore. While that had always been a staple in my life, I was spending a little more time seeing bands and listening to records. It has shaped me, challenged my thoughts and beliefs, inspired me to be and do better, and gave me a unique perspective on the world. It's everything, yet at the same time it's actually nothing. If you are reading this zine, I would imagine you "get it." But if you pass the average person on the streets, they would just hear it as banging on loud guitars with someone screaming overtop the noise. And they wouldn't be wrong. But there is way more to it than just the initial auditory experience. I can't explain to the people I work with why it's reasonable and important for me to drive 4 hours to a show, then turn around and drive right back home. How can you explain that perfect show? You know, it's a combination of the right venue and right bands. There is a raw emotion that can't be duplicated. It's the thing you'll never forget. Some people will never be fortunate enough to experience it. It will only be noise.

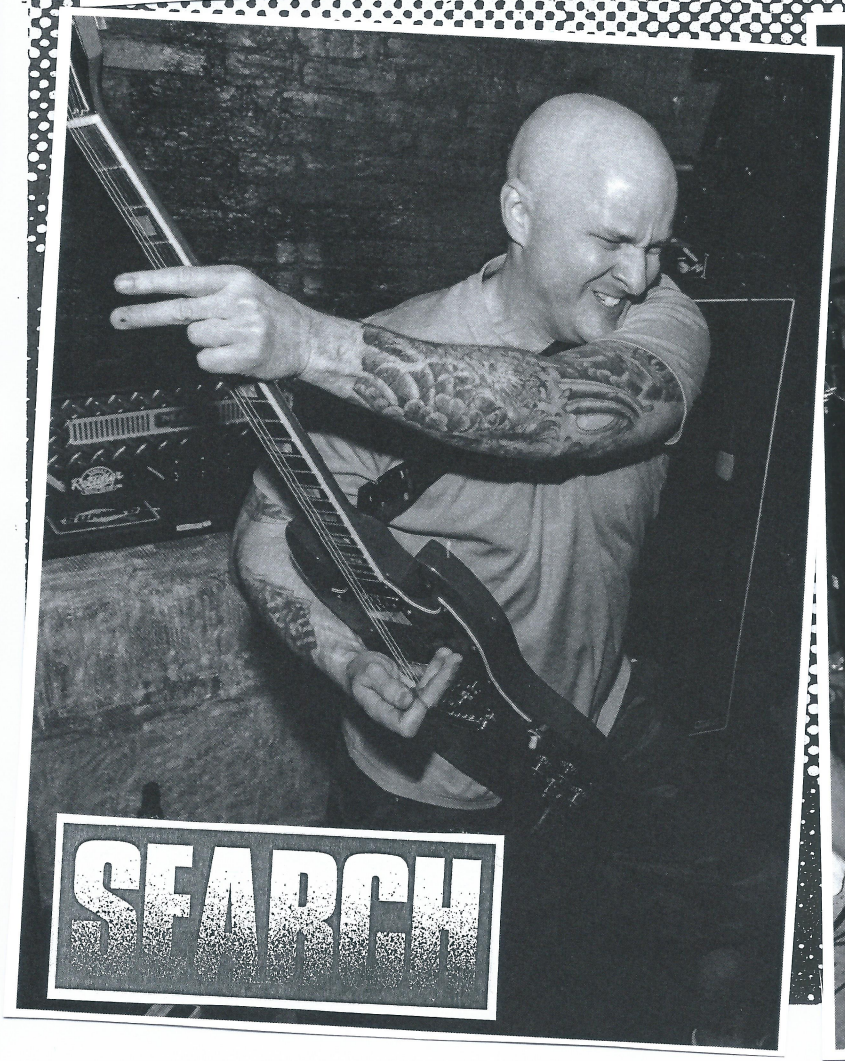
In the late 90s, I would only skate east coast companies. To me, they felt real. On the east coast, we have to deal with bad weather and bad cement. I always felt west coast kids had it so much easier when it comes to that stuff. East coast skateboarding was always raw and organic. Check out Eastern Exposure 3 to see what it was like then. In 2001, I moved to Philadelphia. Philly was always a huge skate destination. For some reason once I moved there, I actually skated less. I'd hit Love Park, City Hall, and FDR. However I would usually just skate small parks in the suburbs. This was the time I began doing Start Today, Bottled Up Records, and started taking photos at shows. I moved back to Pittsburgh in 2006 and started skating a little more.



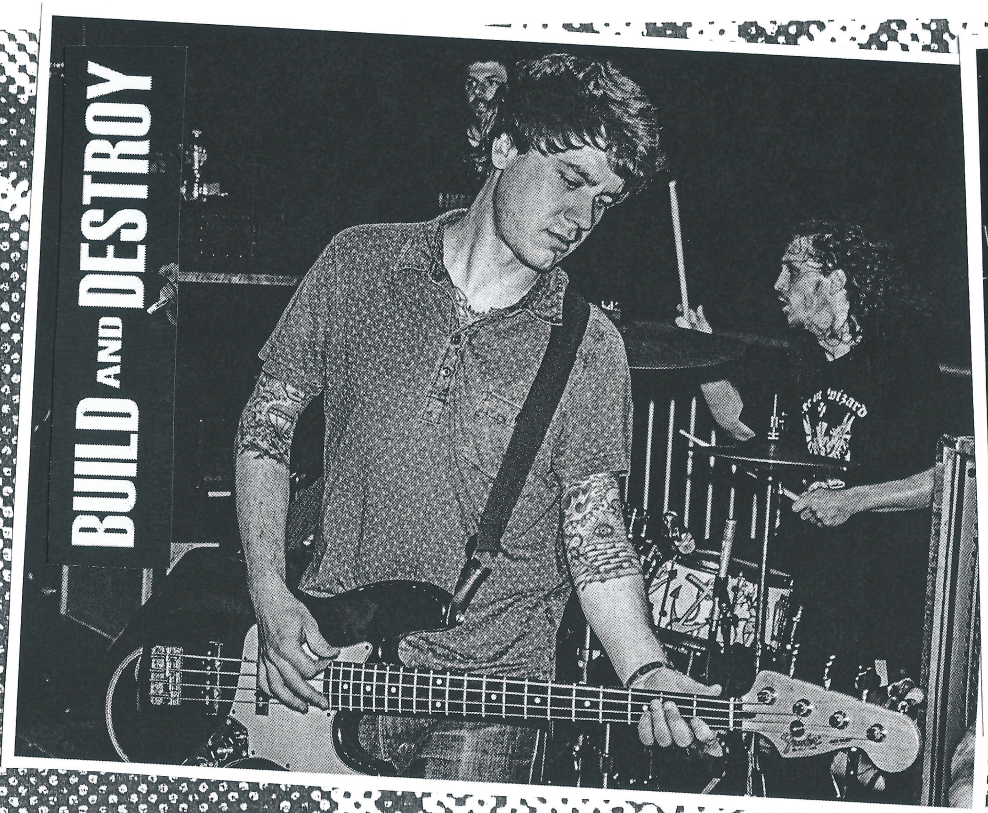
Today is November 29, 2017 and I'm still skating. And I will be until I can't stand. I'm not able to do it as often as I would like, but I appreciate every time I am on my board. I usually skate a private warehouse. A bunch of older guys rented out a space and built a bunch of ramps. I absolutely love it there. My knees can't handle street skating, and I'm too old to keep running from the cops over something so stupid. So I'll go there after work and let off some steam. I've been skating with some of the people who go there for about 20 years. It's funny thinking how back then we would have been vibing and criticizing each other, but now it's all a celebration. No tricks are wack. It's really a true version of self-expression. Most sessions are spent cheering each other on, with a little shit talk. I think we all appreciate where we've been and where we are at. It's the way I had always pictured skating in my adult life. Roll forever.

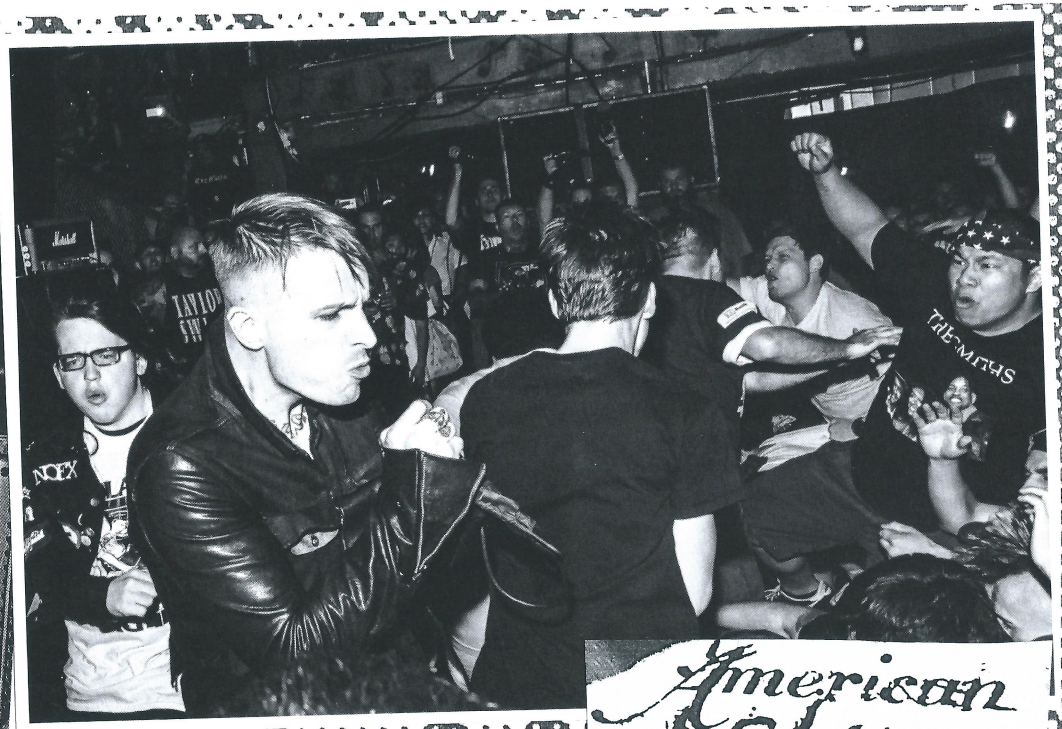
THE
TURN

SLAPSHOT


SEARCH

INSTED


BUILD AND DESTROY


American Nightmare

STAND OFF

THE RIVAL MOB

KILLING TIME
AMENITY

FLOORPUNCH

HAVE HEART

ATARI

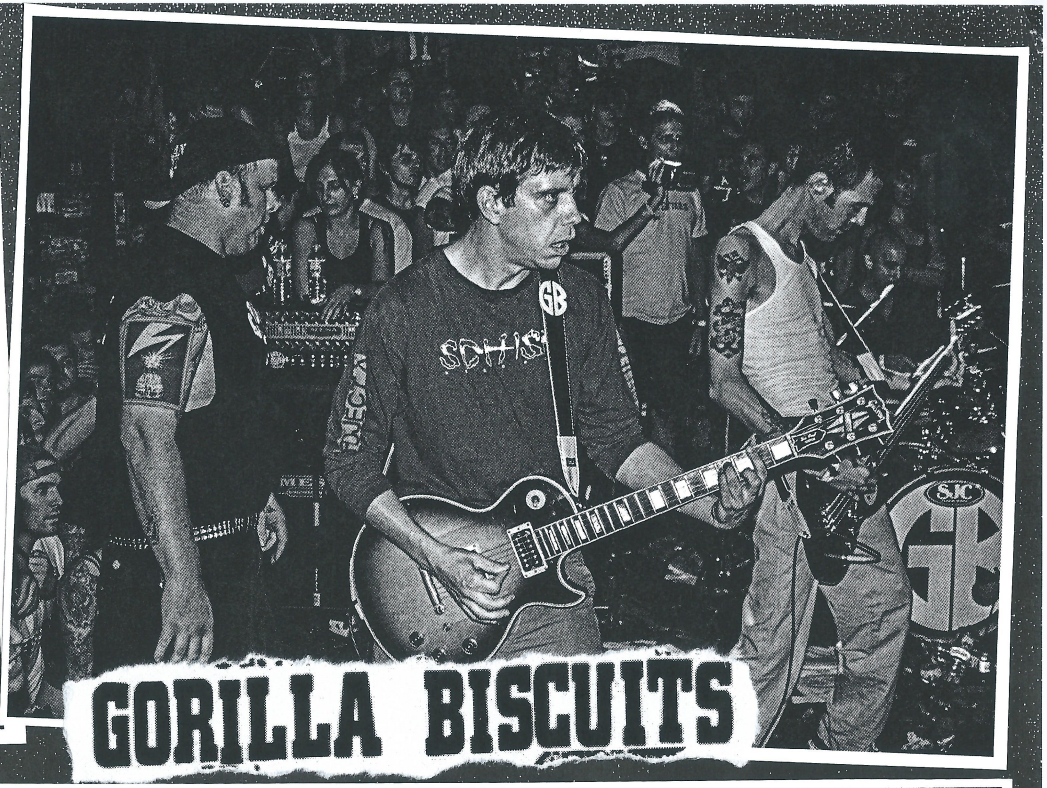
Marshall
MESA
THE SUICIDE FILE

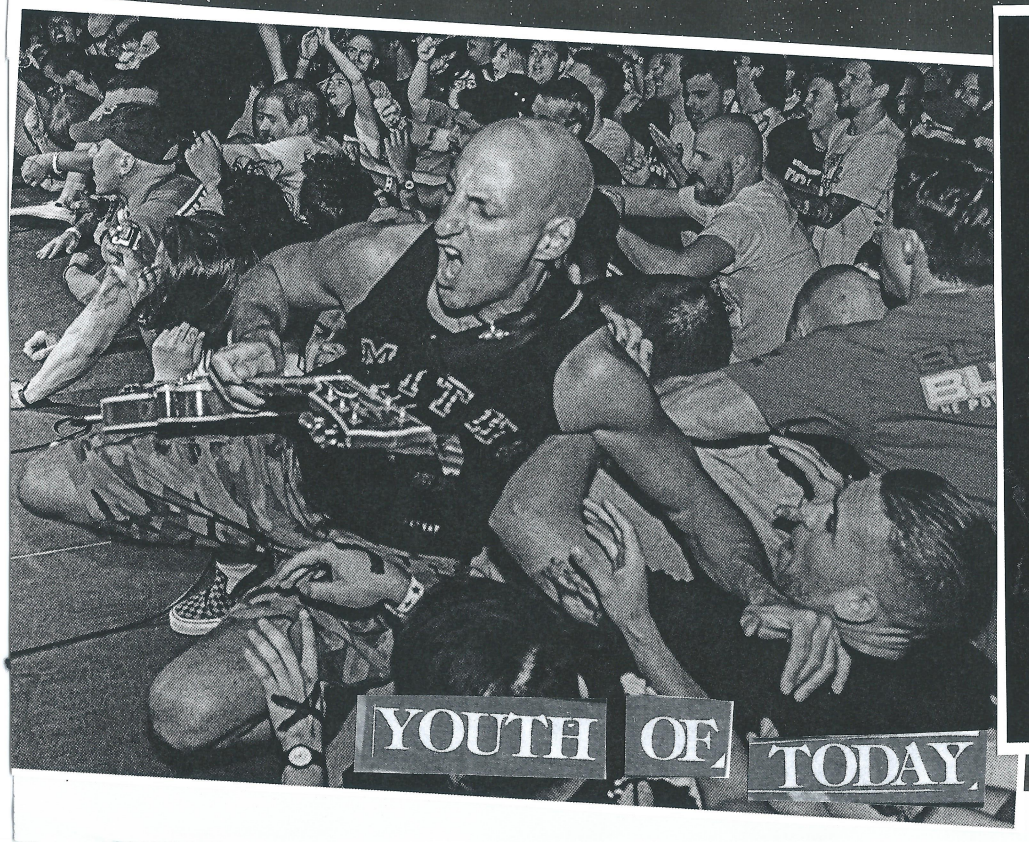
UNION OF FAITH

NEGATIVE APPROACH

EXIT
WORLD BE FREE

BOLD

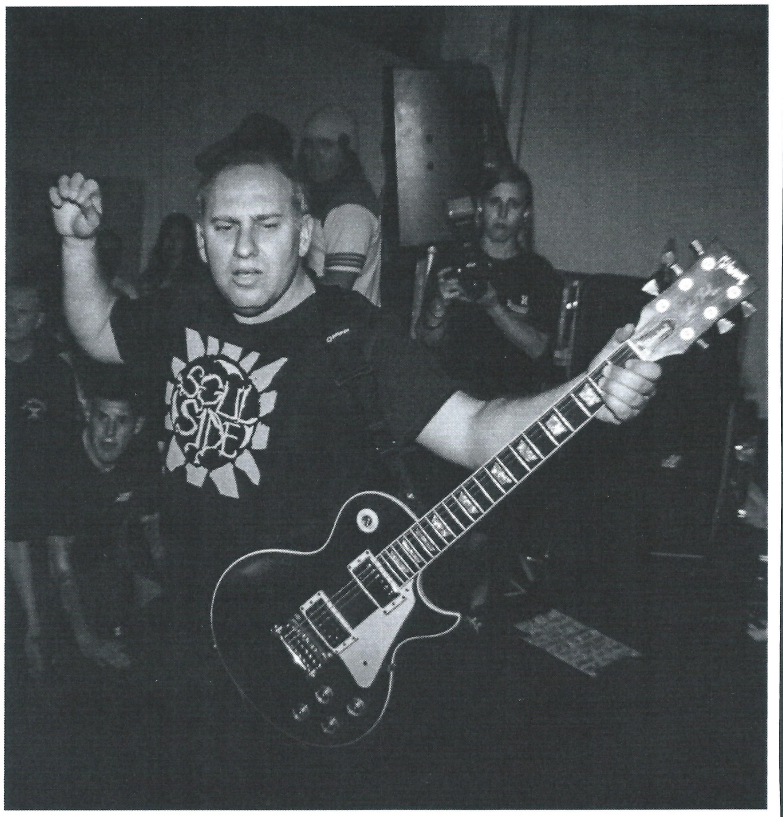

GB
SJC
GORILLA BISCUITS


YOUTH OF TODAY

JUDGE

CHAIN OF STRENGTH

CHAIN OF STRENGTH



In 2012, Rev posted in their news section that Chain was getting ready to play a show in California. I immediately began planning a trip out there. And then the sad moment hit when I realized it was April 1. Fortunately in June 2014, I finally go to see them in Washington, DC. I spoke with Alex briefly after the show. I wanted to ask him about doing an interview then, but I had a long drive back to Pittsburgh and the band looked pretty drained. A couple years later, I finally asked him about doing an interview. I was really excited to get a chance to talk to Alex about the history of the band, and address a few rumors. Here we go...

How did you discover punk/hardcore? Was it through skating or something similar?
Skateboarding did lead to punk rock and hardcore/straight edge. But aside from skateboard magazines like Thrasher, that had these write ups on mostly punk and skate rock, did eventually showcase the youth crew hardcore. Not only was it the magazine but actual skateboarders that I befriended. Three dudes come to mind. The first was my brother's friend Jim; he was the first punk rocker that I jammed with in my garage. The second dude was a really cool skater from Huntington Beach who had spent a summer living up the street. His record collection, was very broad punk metal, new wave, and goth. The third became an actual close friend throughout the years and his name was Dominic Isabella. I borrowed a shoebox of cassette tapes that had everything. All the top hardcore/punk bands and a lot of cool demos from local bands. Thanks to skating that was a gateway to cool underground music.

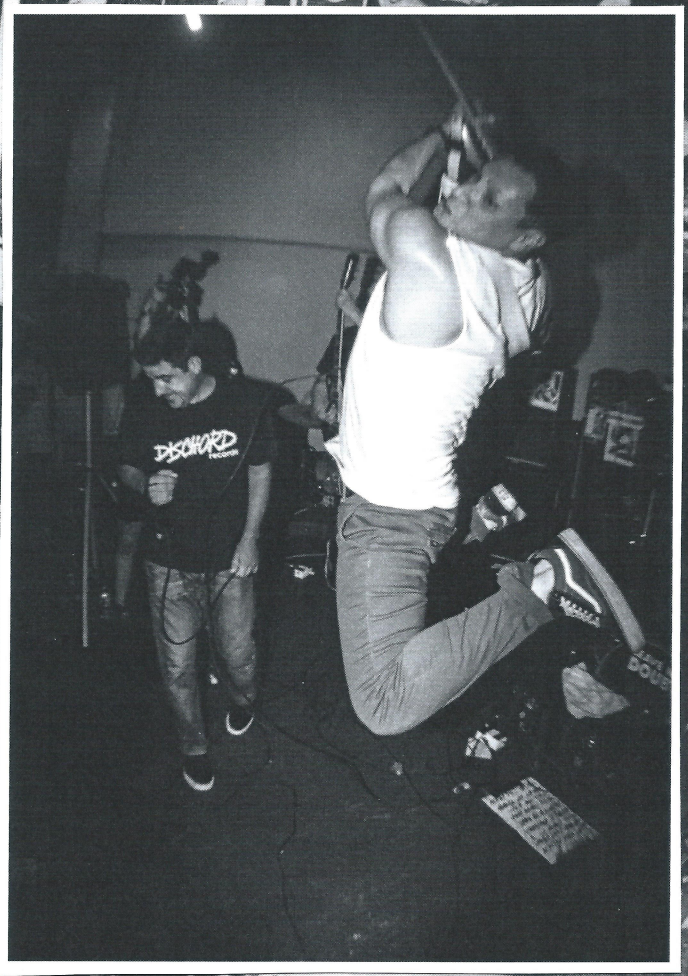
Take me back to the start of Chain of Strength.
Before I met Chris Bratton, I played drums in a band called Against the Wall. I met Chris sharing his drums at a No for an Answer show that Against the Wall also played. We got to talking; he offered me a ride home because we lived in the Inland Empire and I was too young to drive at that time. He saw that I had a Gibson SG guitar and assuming I was just a drummer, the guitar in my room led to an invitation to check out a new band he was also drumming in called Chain of Strength. I tagged along to a rehearsal and was blown away. I borrowed a bass from my friend Jeff Sayer, and learned how to play bass really quick. And about a month or two later we recorded the first 7 inch. The first show was really cool. Having been a drummer, it was nice to be out in the front playing bass. This was a big show. It was at Yester Years Club in Pomona, CA, with Chain of Strength, Hardstance, Bold, Insted, Soul Side, Underdog, and headlining was Youth of Today.

Was there a band that really influenced the direction of the band?
From my perspective, the main ingredients were DC Hardcore, Boston Hardcore, and New York Hardcore. Some of the bands that were really exciting, to name a few, Cro-Mags, Dag Nasty, Negative Approach, SSD, and somehow the spirit of The Smiths got in there too.

Was True Til Death the demo? Were there actual Chain demos tapes?
This is true. The first 7 inch was released but was actually a demo. And my first time recording music in a proper studio.

CHAIN OF STRENGTH
CHAIN OF STRENGTH
CHAIN OF STRENGTH

How did you get hooked up with Rev to do that 7"? How stoked were you, because at that time, everything they had released was golden?
I agree. Everything they did have out at the time was on point. Youth of Today asked us to jump on a show with them in AZ, and from what I remember, Ray of Today seemed to have made a point to watch our set at that show; and it must have made a good impression because he asked us to be on his label. All we had was the demo recorded; he and Porcell said the demo was good as is, and to just go ahead and put it out. It all seemed surreal because this was a time when the youth crew scene was new and organic, and to be a part of that movement was a time and place that was special.
Win win,I guess you can say Rev shined up our brand and we boosted their legacy.



Why did you release the second 7 inch on a Euro label?
That's not the case -The second 7 inch was released on our own label, called Foundation Records. I believe it was bootlegged by European labels such as Lost and Found, and there was an unauthorized batch released/sold by Dan Rawe.
I didn't know that. I always thought First Strike did the original press, and had no idea Foundation was band related.

Did you guys play a lot of shows while you were an active band? Pre-internet, the west coast might have well have been on the other side of the world. I know there has always been a big difference between east coast and west coast bands and shows. Did you like playing out east?
Yes, we did play a lot of shows on both coasts but we were very well received and played a lot of shows on the east coast. The only difference I saw between east and west coast bands was the comradery between the east coast bands was stronger than on the west.

Was there anything you would have liked to see Chain accomplish?
Recording and releasing the 12" would have been nice. We had a really strong batch of material; 70% done for a full length that we never got through the finish line. In modern times I feel like Chain of Strength playing shows in Europe and South America would be a marvelous experience for us. There seems to be a lot of energy for Chain in those regions of the world and it's a shame if we don't ever get to share that.

Tell me about the end of the initial run of the band.
I guess by the time I was juggling Inside Out and Statue alongside Chain, Chain may have fell to the wayside personally for me. I personally was enjoying exploring my songwriting in those two bands. Some of the other guys were getting into college and their education and I think there was something cool about ending while we were on top.

What was the last show? Was it planned and/or announced?
The last show was planned/announced and it was at Rajis in West Hollywood. Down by Law headlined. Downcast opened and then we played. It was a cool but odd show. I feel bad that nobody stayed for Down by Law.

Are there any unreleased Chain songs?
Yes, there are a few songs unreleased, but not professionally recorded.

Chain always had clean layouts, merch and logo. It's almost like a team or brand with style and color.
Yes, there was definitely a team style and overall theme for the band. California Youth Crew with an East Coast touch.

What did you do after the band ended? You've been in a lot of other bands.
Inside Out until that ended also. Then Statue was something I put a lot of energy into. Then I took a break from music until Walter from Quicksand called me to come start a band in NYC. That ended up being World's Fastest Car. After that ran its course I briefly joined Ignite for a tour for which I played guitar. I didn't stick around for Ignite because I got a good job building guitars at Fender. While I was working for Fender I got asked to join Alien Ant Farm playing bass, from 2006 to 2008. I currently play guitar in Excel, livin' a low key life building sweet custom guitars.

How important was it that the reunion shows had to have the original lineup, and not someone filling in?
It was very important. It seems really lame otherwise. Chris and I did play a show with Curt one time at Che Café without Ryan and Frosty. I played guitar. Sergio from Amenity played bass. There was one other show with a lineup change in which Chris and I were replaced. There was a miscommunication. Chris Hervey played drums and Art Alvarez played bass. Other than those shows, the lineup stayed the same.

Do you think it's weird that people still intensely care about a band that only released two 7 inches, over 25 years ago?
Man, I don't think it's weird. I think it's really cool and an honor . It's exciting to have had that much impact with such little output. It is interesting…

Were you nervous getting back on stage again at the Rev showcase in New York?
Yeah maybe a little nervous. Some of the guys had been off duty for the last 20 years, not playing any shows in any bands. Chris, Frosty, and I kept the most active with music playing live, but despite the other members' inactivity I think we pulled it off and did pretty well. There was definitely an excitement with running into others around town that were psyched to see us play. We love New York!

Is this kind like a bowling league to you, or are you planning on writing anything new?
I don't really consider this a bowling league. We're just a group of old friends. We feel lucky to have this band and people want to see us play. I'm not sure if we'll ever play again, but we're definitely not writing any new material.

You played in several bands after Chain broke up.
Yes, Inside Out, Statue, World's Fastest Car, Ignite, Alien Ant Farm, and Excel.

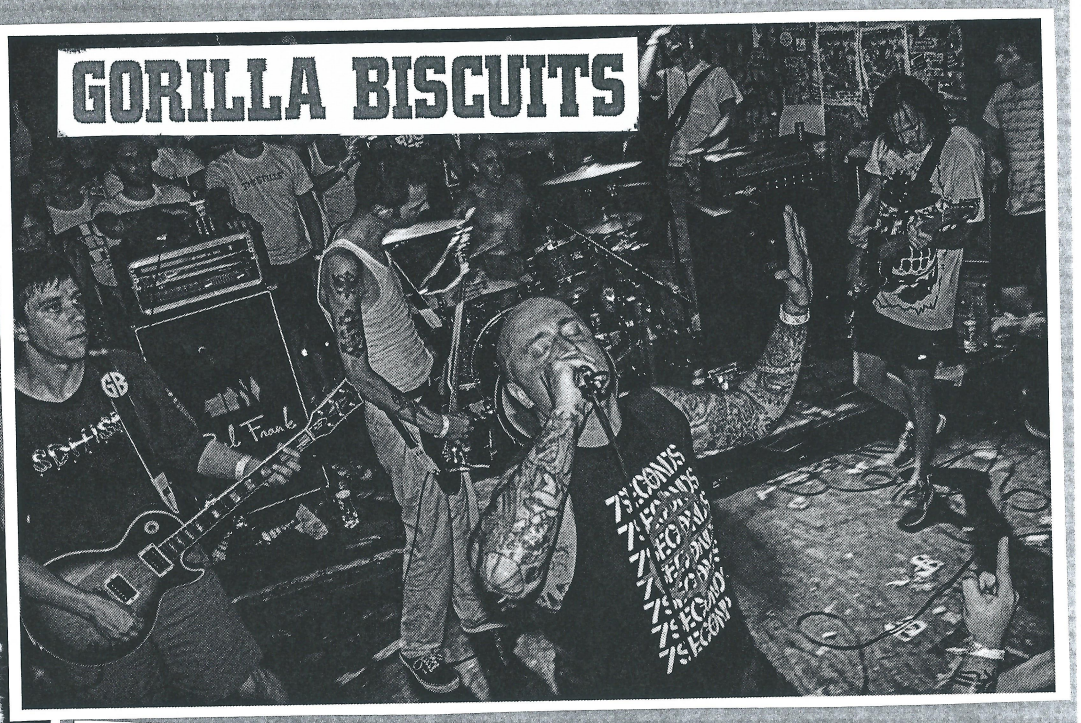
What's going on in your life now?
You know what, enjoying Southern California. I live by the beach. Really busy building custom guitars. Just kind of riding the wave with music right now; it comes and goes. Things are really calm at the moment, but I'll let you know when the waves get bigger.

PAISTE
RUDE

CHAIN OF STRENGTH

CHAIN × CREW

AGITATOR



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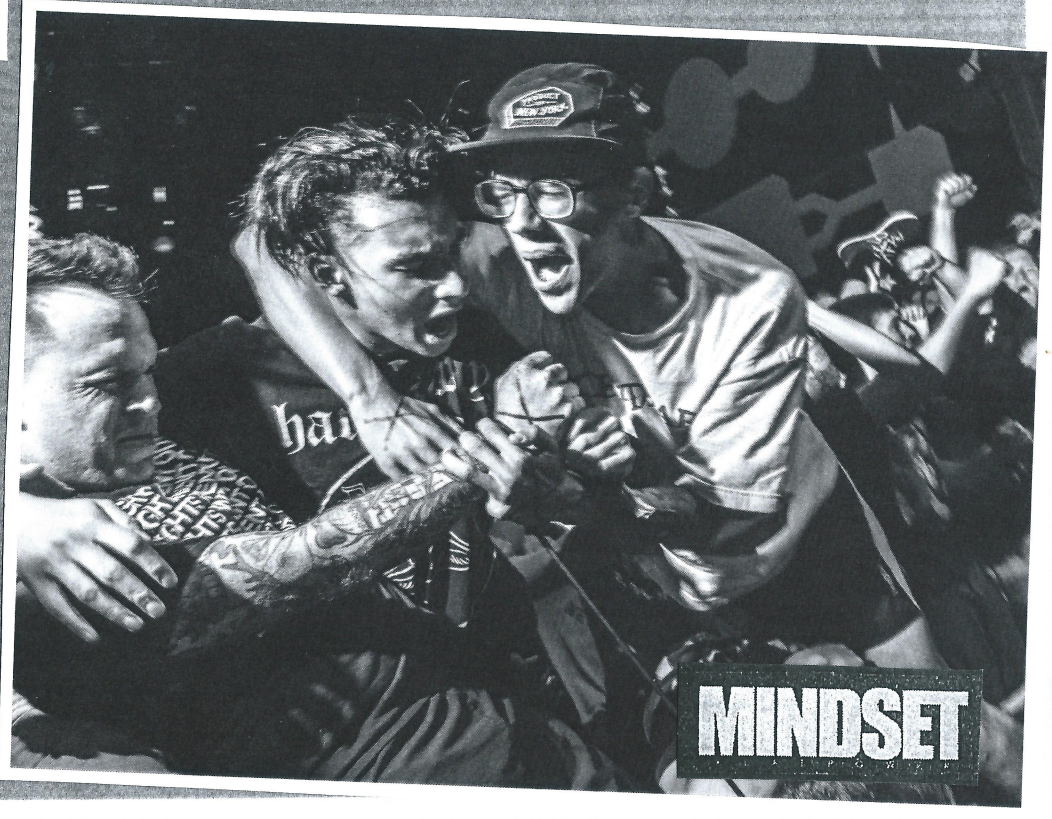

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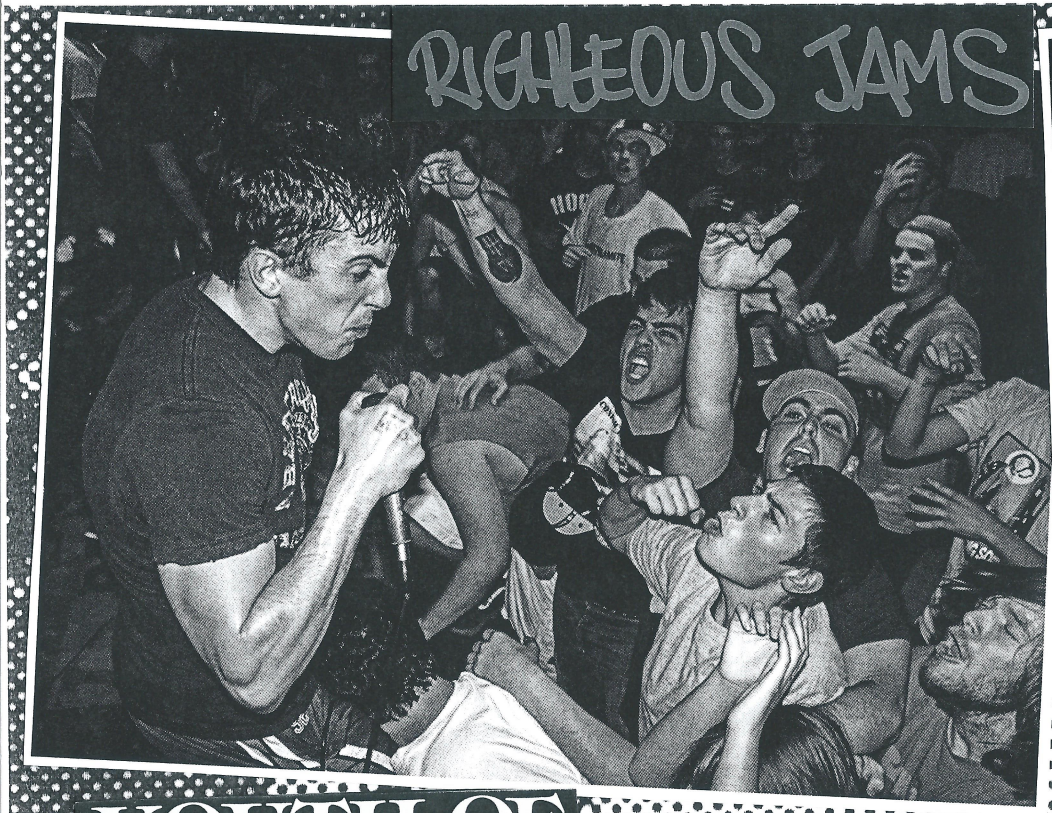
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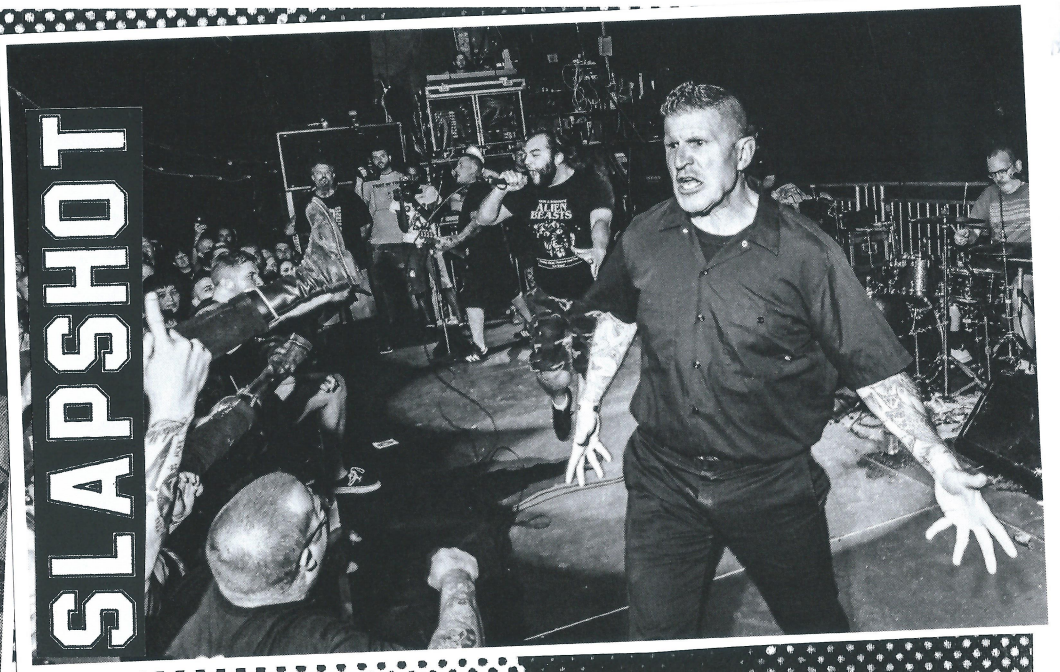
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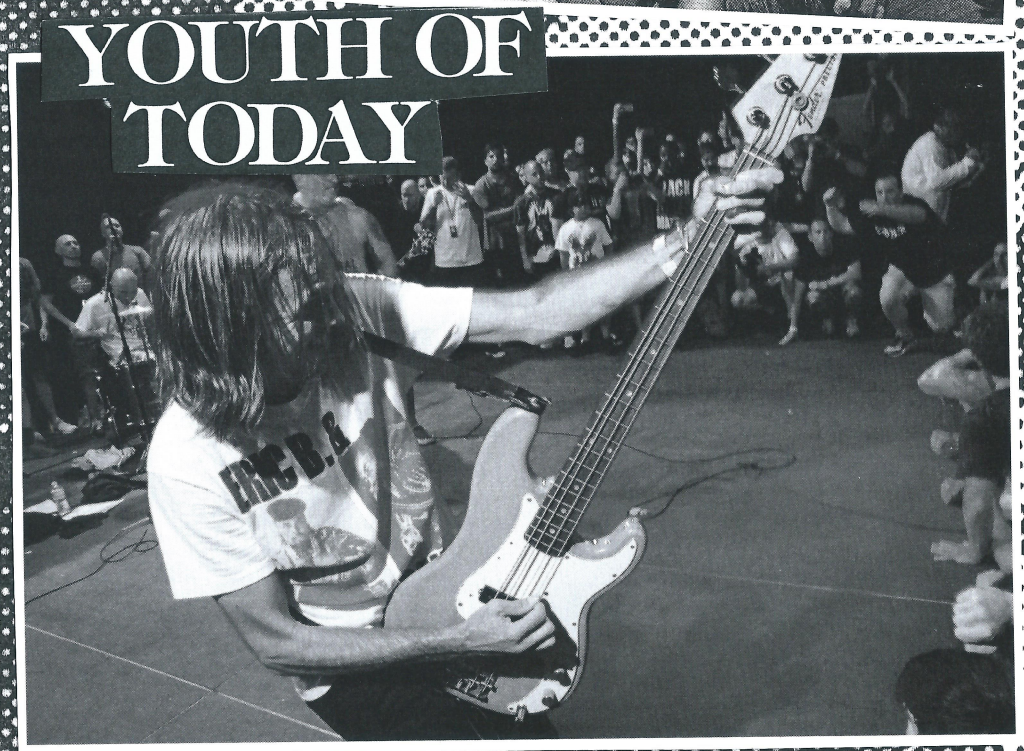
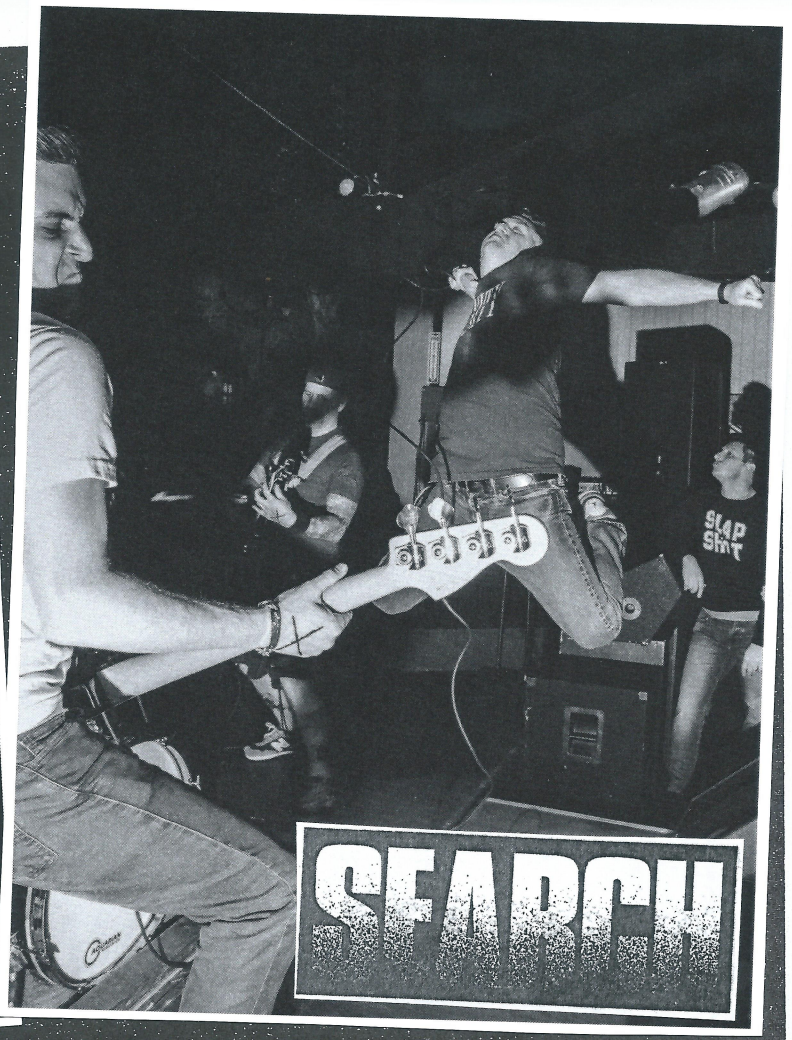
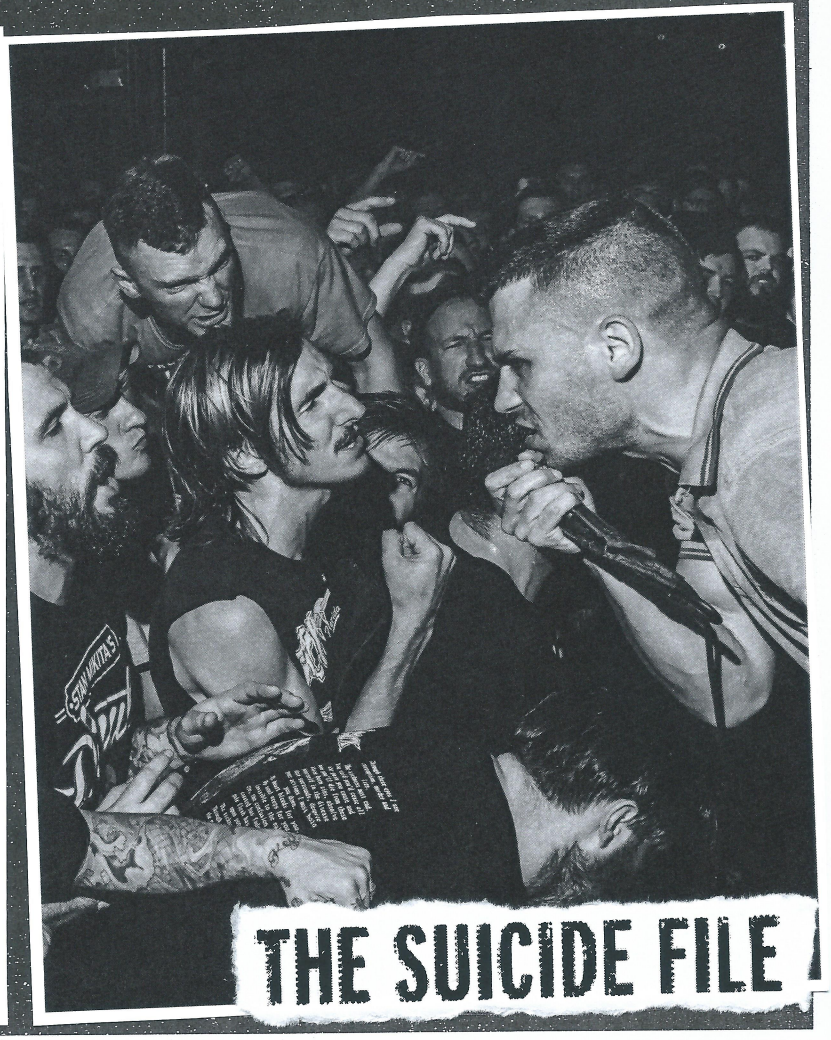

YOUTH OF TODAY

EARTH CRISIS

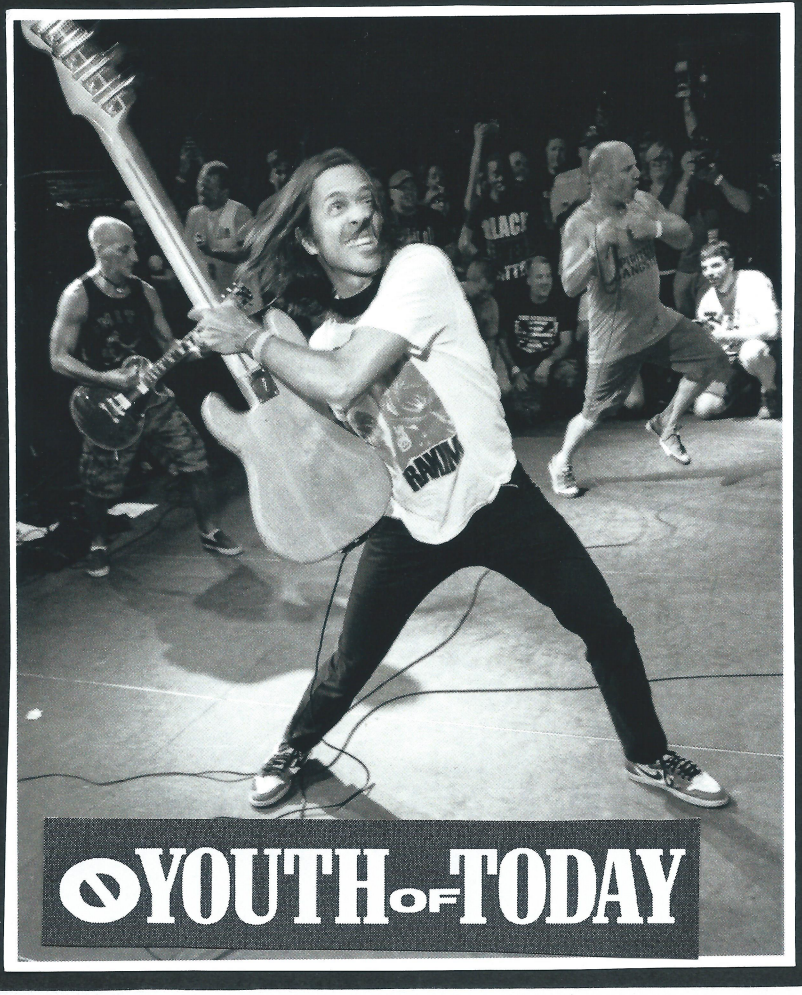
SOUL CONTROL


SEARCH

IRON AGE


THE SUICIDE FILE

I don't understand all the hate on photographers at shows these days. I know there are more now than in the past, but is it really that big of a problem? I mean it does take away from the hang out on the side of the stage because I am so down crowd, but come on. A responsible photographer isn't going to take away from the band. Constant stage mosh (including pushing band members out of the way so everyone can see your sick moves) and crowd punching are worse to me. I think photographers are still an important part of the scene. We document time and place. It's funny I hear people complain about it, then message me the next day asking if I got any pics of them diving. Taking photos at shows is not really as easy as it looks. You have to deal with constant light changes, moving people. Shooting at a big event like This is Hardcore is even harder because people are constantly grabbing at my legs to climb on stage. Plus you get the occasional person who has to mosh or dive into us. It's imperative to keep your head on a swivel, while trying not to miss important moments. I'm obviously biased in this discussion though. I like that you can have several photographers at the same show and everyone's pics are different due to shooting style and gear. I've never charged for my photos. I don't ask to be comped at a show. I can pay my way in, I just like the opportunity to shoot and try to give a little back.



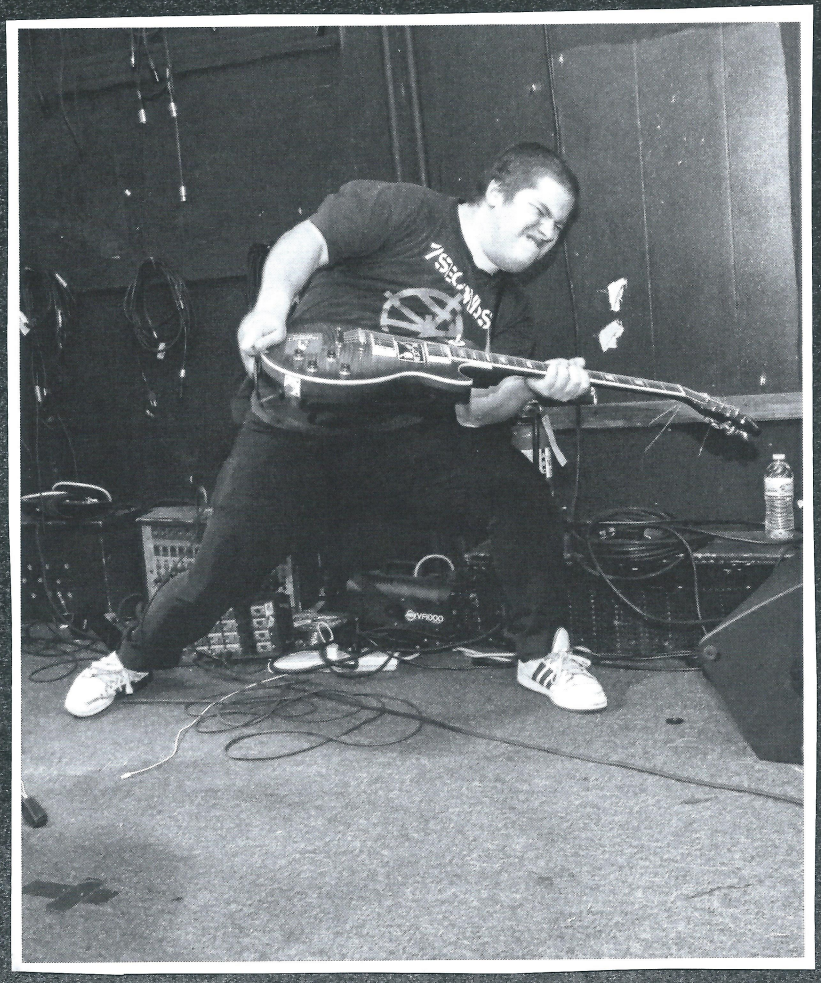
"Sometimes it's death that sets us free." That's my favorite line from the last Bane record. On the surface, it can easily be tossed away as a line about dying, or possibly the end of the band. Calling Hours resonated in my head for weeks after I heard it, and the meaning began to change for me. "Don't grieve your own end before you have finished it." We've all been there. You lose a job, a relationship falls apart, or your friendship isn't what it once was. Someone else makes a decision that affects or changes your whole life. It's easy to start questioning everything and doubting your self-worth. Here's the thing: just because someone made a decision, it doesn't mean it's the correct decision. There have been times when I would beat myself up over things like this. It would destroy any sense of self. All I could see was my flaws. Clearly there has to be a reason that this person doesn't want anything to do with me, and it's my fault. If only I would have... Again, let me stress that just because someone made a choice, it's not necessarily the right choice. Speaking from experience, I've been in situations that were slowly killing me. I would tolerate the pain because it seemed like it would be easier to endure than losing the person all together. I've had relationships that push my mind and body to their limits. Then they ended it. And it hurt. Fuck did it hurt. Once I got through the initial pain, the strangest thing happened; I started to feel better. I grew back into me, for better or worse. The death of this "relationship" was actually freeing. It got me away from the pain and misery. It gave me the opportunity to refocus and reinvent. Loss isn't always a bad thing. It's what you choose to do after loss that defines you.

LINE OF SIGHT

LINE OF SIGHT

Line of Sight are a newer band from Washington, DC. So far they've put out their demo and a live tape on Mosher's Delight. Next up is their debut 7" on Youngblood Records. I first saw them on the first day of the 2015 React Records showcase in DC. Their set was constant energy from the first note to the last. A couple months later I saw them at This is Hardcore. Over the summer I caught them again in Philly. Judging by the photos I took, they were playing "the stage is lava." Bottom line is this- Line of Sight rules, don't sleep on them. Here is a short Q and A I did with their bass player, Dan.

Tell me a little about yourself and the origin of Line of Sight.
I'm Dan, I'm 33, and I've been straight edge for 15 years. Originally from Yorktown, VA, lived in Richmond for 9 years, and then moved to DC 6 years ago. I like to hike with my wife and dog and The Smiths are the only band better than Youth of Today. Line of Sight started in 2015 with no goal other than playing classic straight edge hardcore.



What attracted you to punk/hardcore?
I think what attracted me most to punk and hardcore was the community aspect. Before going to hardcore shows I would go see bigger punk bands like Bad Religion or NOFX where you were at a massive venue and among 1500 other kids you didn't know. My first real hardcore shows were in Richmond and Virginia Beach and instantly you could feel there was more to this than just the music. Everyone knows each other and everyone does their part to make this show happen. I don't think there are too many other genres of music that have this same experience.

What made you stay?
What makes me stay is that the torch keeps getting passed on and there are consistently new kids, new bands, and new styles coming out that keeps things fresh and interesting. I also love playing music and while I have a lot of musical interests outside of hardcore, it's safe to say that hardcore shows will always be the most fun.

ALWAYS HAVE A CLEAR LINE OF SIGHT

What was your first show?
My first hardcore show was August 23rd, 2002 at Club 929 (now Strange Matter). The lineup was The Hope Conspiracy, Count Me Out, Suicide File, Knives Out, and The Takeover. It was my first week of college and I didn't know anyone yet. That was unfortunately my only time seeing Count Me Out and I wasn't into them yet (missed their last show too, still bummed on that). I certainly remember the moshing being just SLIGHTLY different than when I saw Anti-Flag and Less Than Jake a few years before. I also remember people stage diving into the bleachers on the side and thinking how crazy that was, though it wasn't long before I realized that is just what happens at every show there. Definitely an incredible show to say the least and the catalyst for my future involvement in hardcore.

How important was it to you to be a "straight edge band?" It seems like over the years the number of bands that actually label themselves as such has decreased.
I don't think that the label of being a straight edge band was nearly as important as the sound or the message. Line of Sight represents a style that a lot of us grew up on and don't hear too much of these days. Straight edge is important to us all and I think it's a lifestyle that can be incredibly supportive and positive, but none of us want anyone to feel like only those who are straight edge can get anything out of our music. It's true that there aren't as many bands who label themselves as such nowadays and that's fine, I think everyone has their reasons, but I do think it is important for us to show straight edge is still here and is a truly positive option to consider.

LINE OF SIGHT

You guys made actual demo tapes in the era of bandcamp. You are correct. We actually made them solely for people who still have tape decks in their cars. Can you still get blank CD-Rs?

Someday there will be a 7" out on Youngblood, right? For sure! Coming out real soon I swear. Record release show is January 26th, 2018 in DC!

You just did a short tour with Insist and True Vision. How did that go? Insist/True Vision tour was incredible. Wish it was a world tour but sadly it was just a week on the East Coast. We've been friends with the Brits for a while now especially Tom Pimlott of Violent Reaction fame and fortune and it's always a great time when any of their bands come over. All the shows were a lot of fun. Atlanta might have been one of the hottest shows I've played but it rocked. The Charlotte show with Substance was my favorite. I remember there were a lot of younger kids who seemed super stoked on straight edge hardcore and really went off for Insist. We got the touring band hookup at Chipotle twice so shout out to them but let's work on that queso, ok?

LINE OF SIGHT

Were you psyched to play This is Hardcore in 2016, as you were a fairly new band at the time?
Yes definitely, that whole day was stacked with awesome bands, including a lot from DC. Very special honor to play with Youth of Today. Really wished they played Stabbed in the Back though with Walter on bass, love that bass line!

This zine will be out by FYA fest in Tampa, which you are playing. Are you doing a tour, or just a trip down to play the fest?
No tour down to Florida unfortunately. I believe Red Death is touring down there with Division of Mind. I think I'll fly down and go to Disney World after the fest.

Members of LOS are in other bands, talk about that.
Connor and Robin I think are the greatest hardcore duo since Ray and Porcell. I hope they also do a 7". They're in Red Death, Protester, and Civic Duty. Connor is in Genocide Pact and Witchtrial. Robin is in Guilt Parade and Dizzy Pleasure Club. Austin also plays in Praise and Free and I'm in Protester as well.

I make the trip down about once a year to see a show. Tell me about DC hardcore in 2017.
DC Hardcore is the best! I'm so happy I made the move here when I did. The one thing I'll say about DCHC is I feel that everyone is encouraged to wave their own flag. I don't feel like there is an opposing force to say what is cool or acceptable as I have experienced in the past. Everyone's into whatever they're into and that's how it should be. I see that in practice the most at Damaged City Fest every April. Very diverse crowd and it genuinely feels like everyone is enjoying all the bands regardless if it's their go-to style.

What's good in hardcore right now?
FURY. The absolute best. Really thankful I've had the opportunity to see them as much as I have. Every show is wild and inspiring. Also Standpoint, Open Your Eyes, Abuse of Power, Substance, Diztort, Wild Side, Exit Order, Unjust, and the Flex. RIP Pure Disgust

What would you change?
I'd like to see more mixed bills with different styles or genres like I remember seeing years ago. But also more youth crew please and thank you.

Should the Dischord house be a national monument?
Sure why not. I reckon it'll be after 2020 til we get something like that though.

The Fire
The Smiths
rshall

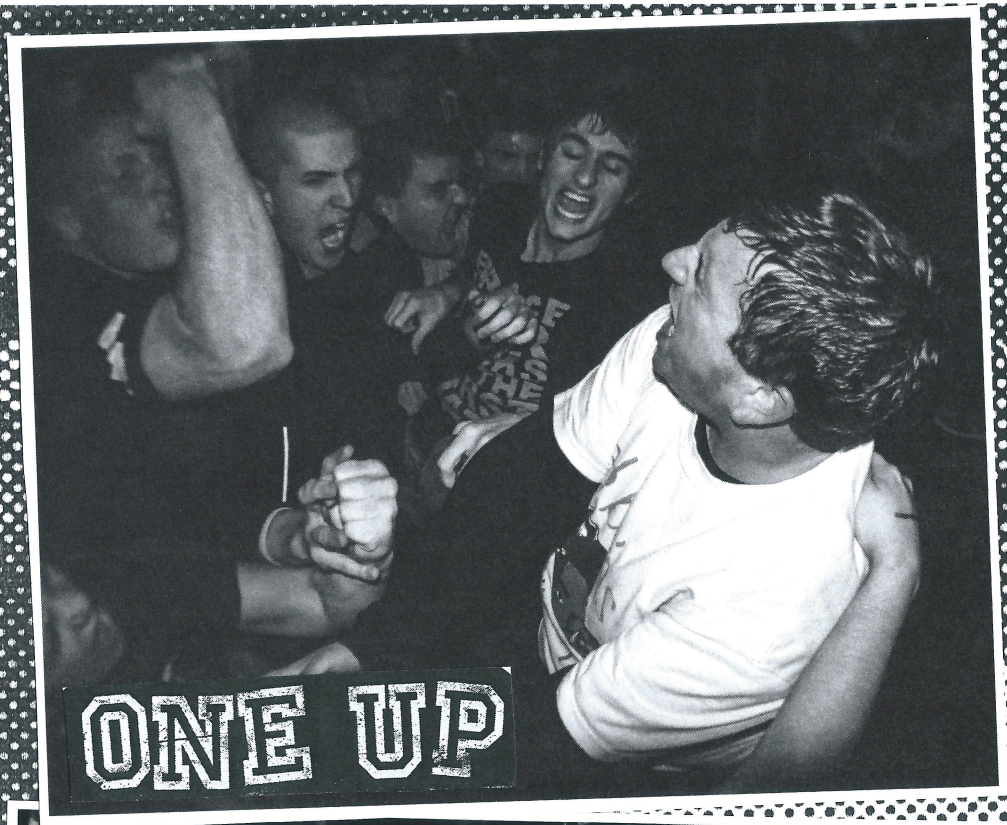
LANEY
PRO-TUBE LEAD
Marshall

snapcase

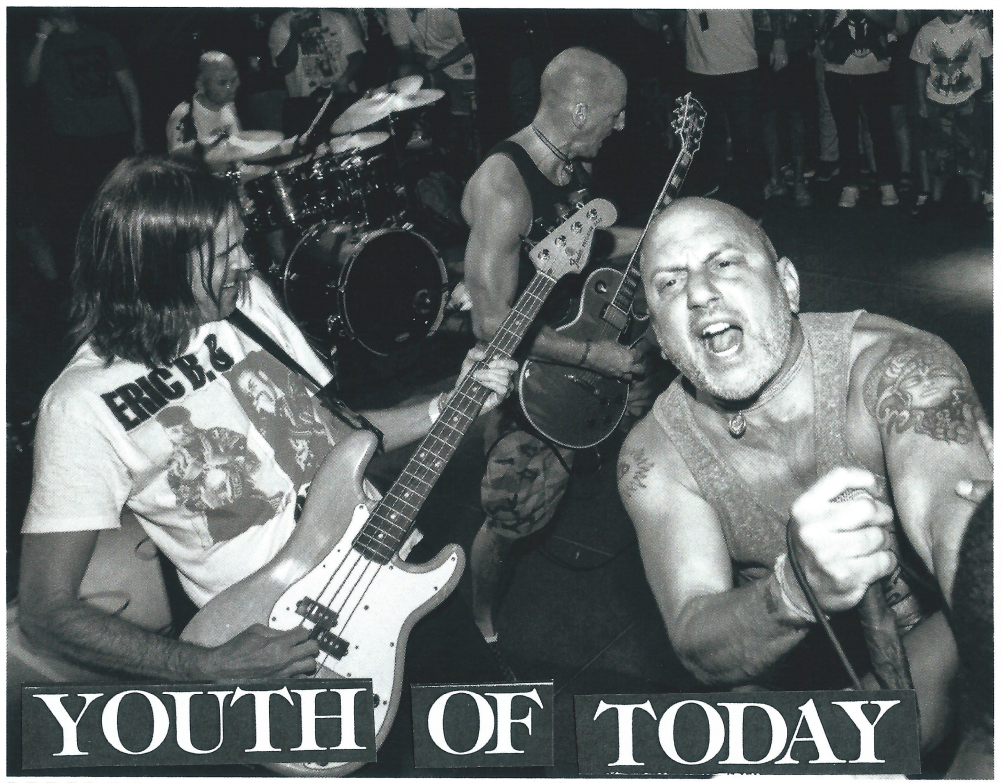
BREAK AWAY

MORNING AGAIN

JUDGE

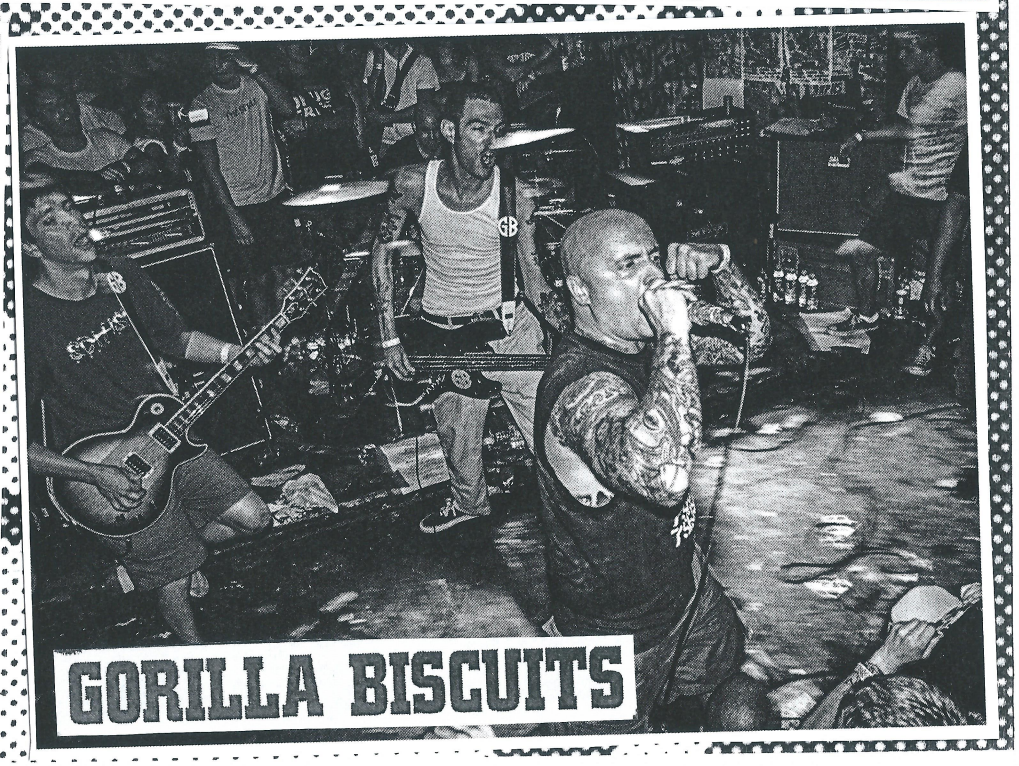


ONE UP

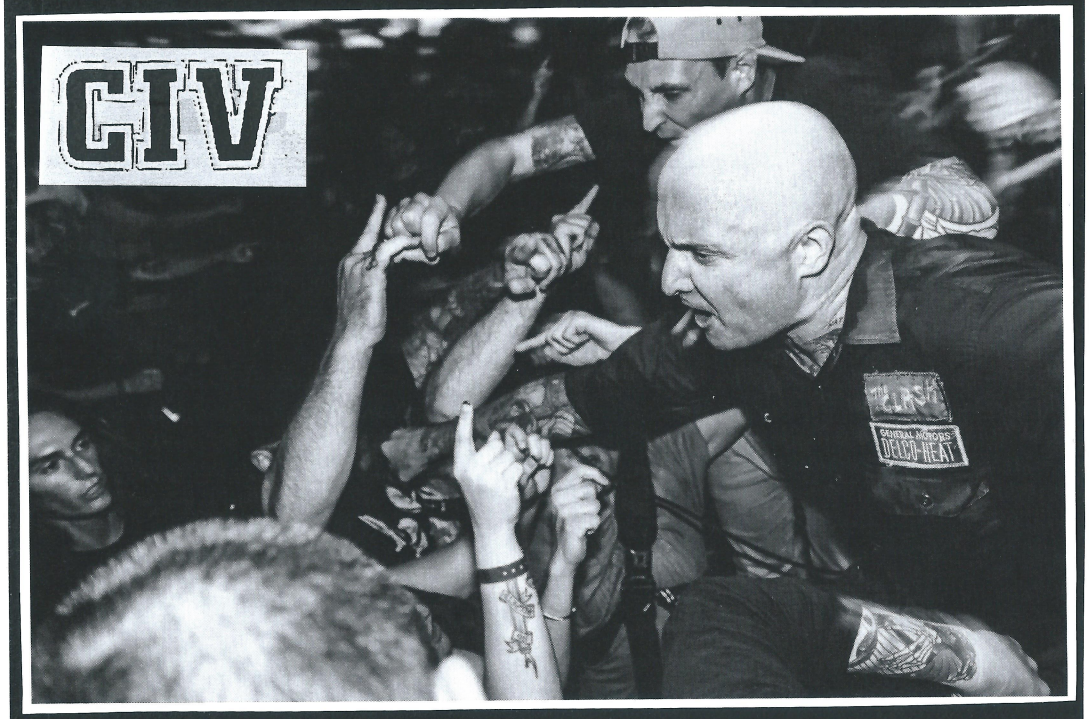


YOUTH OF TODAY

BURN



GORILLA BISCUITS

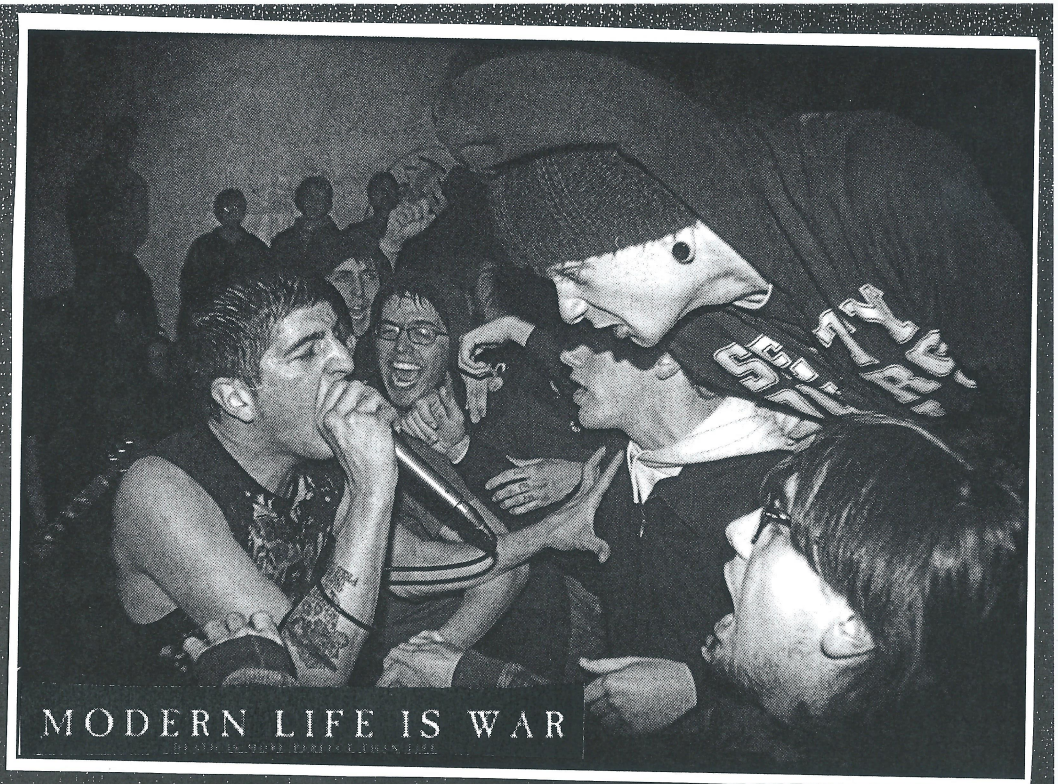

CIV

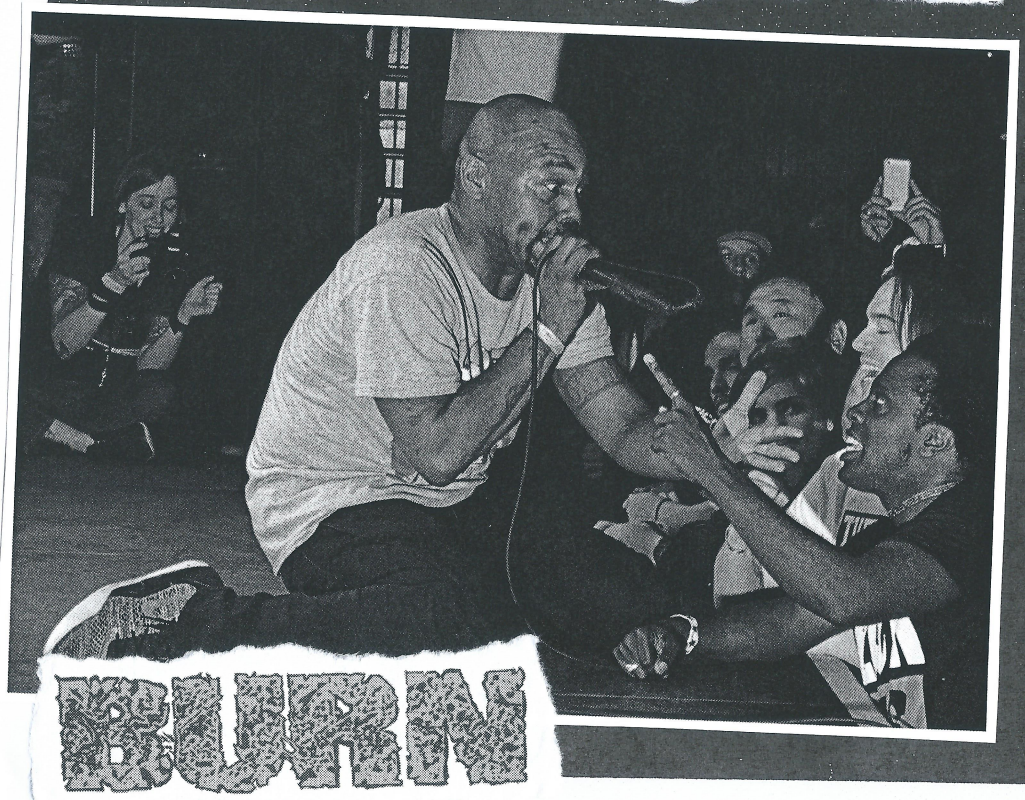
snapcase

DISENGAGE

VIOLENT
REACTION

NO TIME


MODERN LIFE IS WAR


BURN

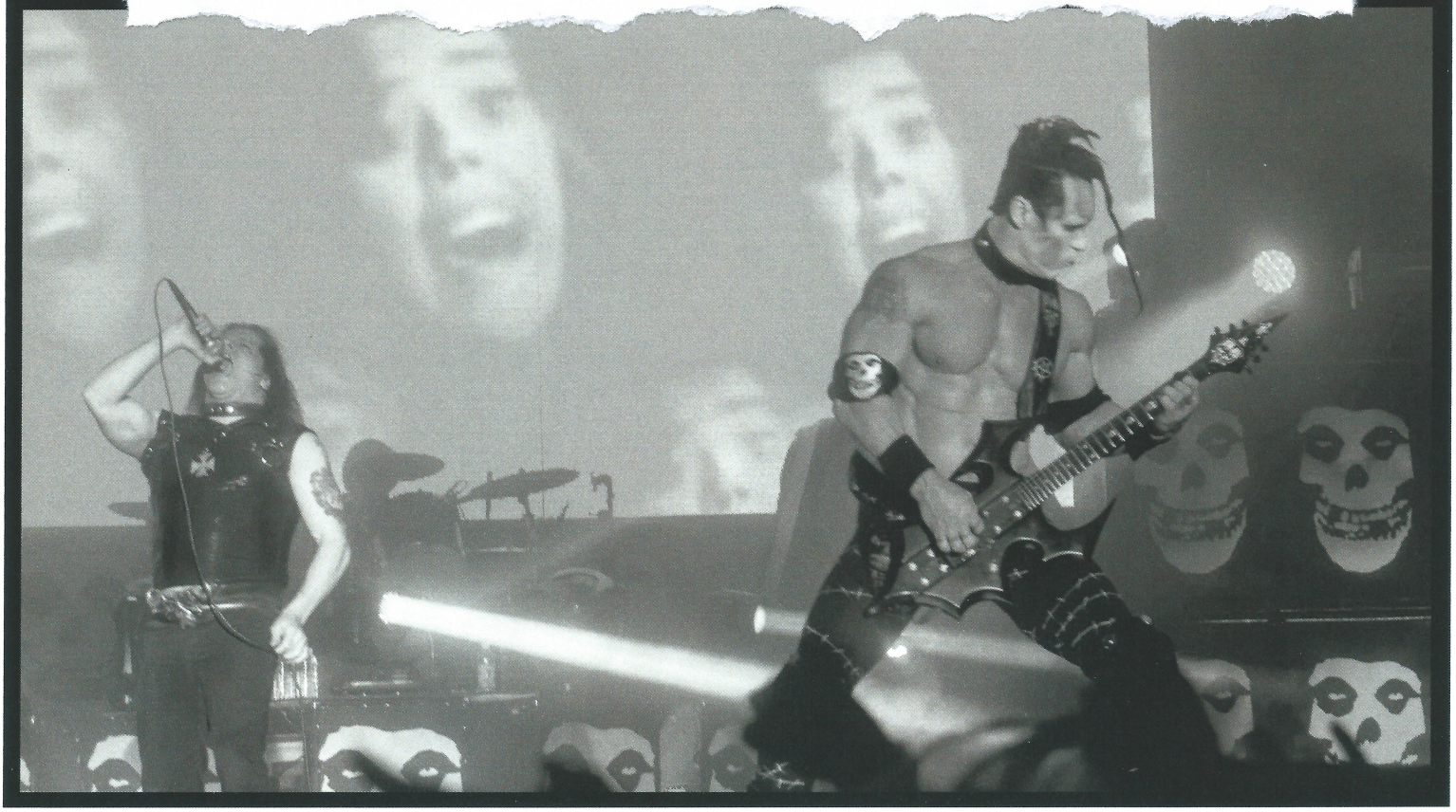
NO PLACE FOR
HOMOPHOBIA
FASCISM
SEXISM
RACISM
Cro-Mags

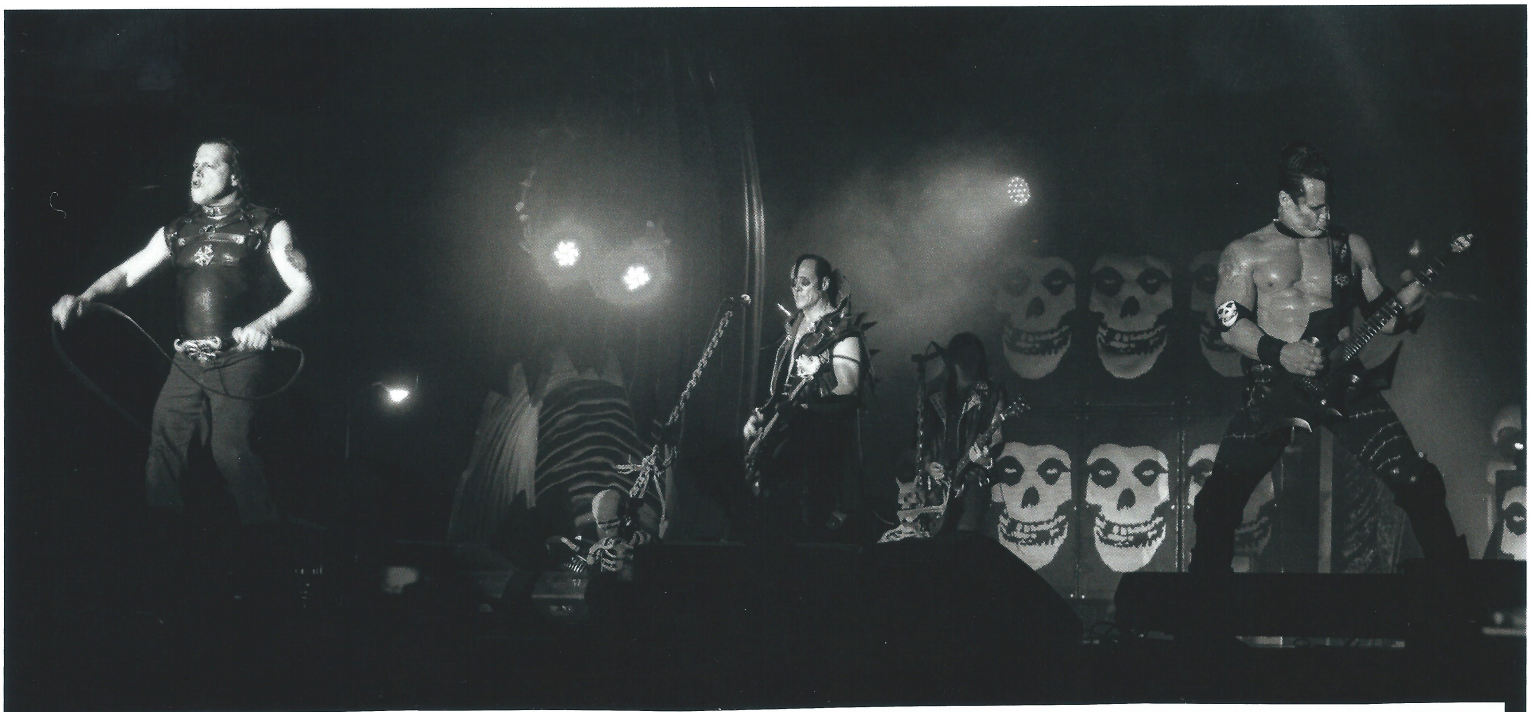
MISFITS

I first found the Misfits through skateboarding. I guess I would have discovered them eventually, but seeing the crimson ghost on skateboards and shirts made me want to find out what it was all about. My first exposure came through Evilive. This is definitely not the best introduction to the Misfits, but despite the bad live recording, I was hooked. I grew up watching horror movies, so this was perfect for me. From there, the obsession started. I tracked down whatever cassettes I could find, and the occasional bootleg 7". Prior to the boxset, bootlegs were they only way you could hear some of the songs. I've always related certain Misfits records to certain times of the year. Walk Among Us fueled launch ramp sessions in the summer of 1988. In fall of 1989, I got Legacy of Brutality, so that record always has an overcast feeling for me. I can remember going to Eide's record store in Pittsburgh in 1989 and paying $20 for the Live at Max's Kansas City record, which is one of the worst sounding records of all time. During this period, whatever fallout there may have been between the band didn't matter. It was simply the love of the music. When I was in college, I did the college radio thing. Every year, we would do a Misfits Halloween tribute show. During the 1995 show, my friend Mike came to the studio with a red copy of Static Age he bought earlier in the day. He was super into the Misfits too and I heard and later bought a lot of bootlegs from him. So by the mid 90s, there was some noise about Jerry and Doyle "resurrecting" the Misfits, which was going to include a new record and tours. That was exciting, but the bad news was there would be no Glenn. Summer of 1997, I finally got to see Jerry and Doyle on stage together. I was still doing radio then, and managed to weasel myself an "interview" with Jerry. In reality, I just wanted to fanboy out. They played that night, and I was super excited. I knew it wasn't the real thing, but I was thinking it was as close as I was going to get.

In late 2004, word got out that Glenn and Doyle were going to do some Misfits songs in Vegas and LA. I was heartbroken that I would not be able to make the trip out west to see them. That spring, Danzig was going to tour the east coast. There were dates in NYC and Philly. I got a text from my friend Dave telling me to go to the Danzig show in NYC. I knew immediately what that meant. A few days later, he told me Glenn and Doyle were going to do a surprise set at the Philly show too, so no need to go to New York. The Philly show was March 2, 2005. It felt like forever waiting for Doyle to come out. Near the end of the Danzig set, Glenn called Doyle out to the stage. He came out and they blasted into 20 Eyes. Doyle was pounding his guitar like it was a fucking jackhammer. Halfway through the first song I thought "if there is ever a real Misfits reunion I may die during the set." I was winded from singing every word like my life depended on it. They played a few more songs before calling it a night. I walked out of the Electric Factory with a smile on my face, having just seen the best thing I'd seen in my life.

DEATH COMES RIPPING



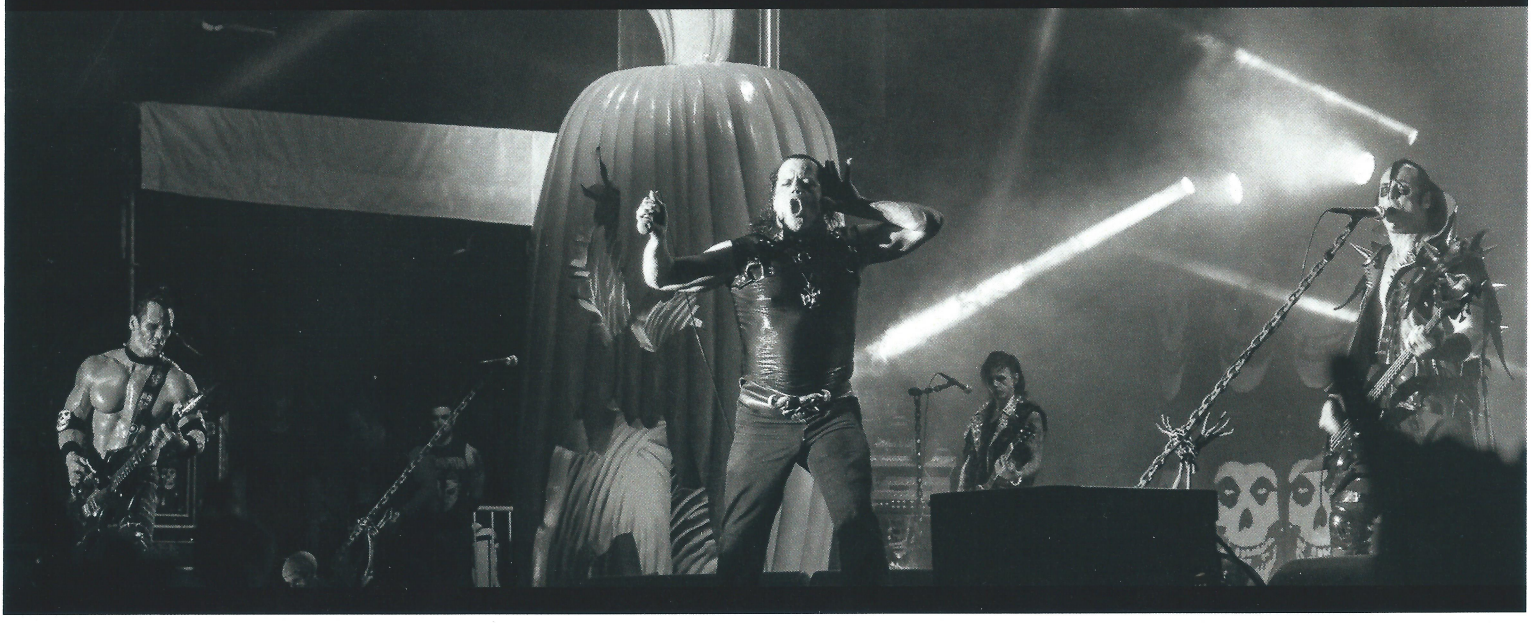


In June 2011, I was in DC for a Youth of Today show. I was talking to one of my friends who told me he had heard from a legitimate source that there was going to be some sort of Danzig/Samhain/Misfits set at Chicago Riotfest that year. About a month or so later, the first of the four original Danzig "Legacy" shows was announced. I quickly bought a ticket and the wait began. This was when Riotfest was spread out over several venues throughout the city. For some strange, yet awesome reason Youth of Today were added to the show. My friend Josh and I drove out to Chicago and met up with my friend Tony. He took us to a couple record stores and to get burritos then dropped us off at the Congress Theater. There were already a lot of people in line when we got there. I saw Porcell and asked him if he heard the soundcheck. He did and started telling me some of the setlist. I was very happy with the song selection. The doors opened, I grabbed a shirt and the wait started. After sitting through what felt like a million bands and a hundred hours, the Danzig backdrop was lowered. Glenn did a bunch of solo stuff then left the stage. A banner for November Coming Fire was raised. The intro for Initium played and Glenn came out in the gimp mask. 8 or so Samhain songs later, Glenn again left the stage. Some sort of crimson ghost banner replaced the Samhain one. The band came out and the 4000 or so people in attendance sang along, drowning Glenn out at times. At one point I was climbing on someone yelling "prime directive, exterminate the whole human race" thinking about how awesome this was. Everyone was there to see the band, no fight or stupid bullshit. After the show, we caught a cab back to Tony's to get Josh's car and headed back to Pittsburgh.

After that, Glenn did a few more Legacy shows, including a small tour. Jerry continued on with The Misfits, and Doyle started a new band, also called Doyle. Then the unthinkable happened. At 10:00am on May 12, 2016 Riotfest announced Glenn, Jerry, and Doyle would be on stage together for the first time in 33 years doing a Misfits set in both Denver and Chicago. I spent the next hour at work trying to decide if this was real or a hoax. Forget about work for the rest of the morning. I decided I would go to the Chicago show. I love Chicago, could skate with Tony and get an oatmeal shake. I immediately bought a weekend pass, as there was no way in hell I was going to miss this. Later that summer at This is Hardcore, I was talking to Robby Redcheeks about the reunion. He said he and Dave had made a pact that if there was ever a Misfits reunion, they would go to every show. I kept thinking what Robby said. The Thursday before the first show, I was texting Dave about going to Denver. He found me a flight on Sunday, which would arrive about 30 minutes before him. The plan was to meet him, pick up the rental car, get lunch and head to the show. I did a quick weather check, which looked like it was going to be perfect. I found a hotel about a mile from the venue. Everything was lining up. Next thing I knew, I was on my way to Denver. I met up with Dave at the airport, got the car and headed to find food, talking about Misfits records the entire time.

BONFIRES BURNING BRIGHT JACK-O-LANTERNS IN THE NIGHT

While at lunch, the first pics of the stage started to circulate. We were going crazy at the sight of the 12 foot tall pumpkins. It was also that moment when I realized this was really going to happen. I was hesitant about doing this so last minute, but it was starting to feel like the right decision. We left the restaurant and headed to pick up Robby. We made it to the venue, now it was time for me to try and get my camera in. I knew there was no chance in the world I'd get a photo pass for this show, so I didn't even bother. I brought my Sony camera with me, as it doesn't look "professional." I got through security with no problem. I walked around for a couple minutes checking things out. I bought 2 bottles of water and started making my way to the stage where the Misfits were going to play (there were two main stages set up.) This was around 1 in the afternoon, and Converge was playing. There was a lot of empty space, so I had no problem getting to the spot where I thought I could get good photos from. A few more bands played, and a few more people showed up. Things were starting to get tight when Bad Religion hit the stage. I've always been a BR fan and was stoked to see they were playing a lot of earlier stuff. As soon as their set ended, a giant curtain dropped over the stage, and more people started to file in. It was a good hour and a half before the Misfits were going to play, but you could feel the tension rising in the air. No one was leaving their spot. The sun had set and the anticipation began to grow. Occasionally there would be a flash of light behind the curtain and you'd see Jerry's silhouette. On each end of the stage, there was a dull glow from the orange of the pumpkins. Every crunch of Doyle's guitar while they were setting up made the crowd salivate even more. I was so fucking excited I couldn't stand it. I got a text with a photo of the setlist. I couldn't have been any happier. When I saw Hybrid Moments on there, my jaw dropped. I never thought they'd play that. Time pretty much slowed down at this point. Finally, something was played over the speakers, the curtain dropped. Jerry and Doyle emerged from the darkness and Glenn appeared with a ferocity I had never seen from him. The band opened with Death Comes Ripping, which was perfect foreshadowing of the next 70 minutes. Literally 3 seconds into their set, security grabbed my camera. I didn't even know what happened at first. They said I could have it after the show. I stood in one spot for 8 hours for nothing. But fuck it, it didn't matter at this point. The one band I've loved forever who I NEVER thought would play again was directly in front of me, tearing through the stage like a buzzsaw. There were crimson ghost skulls on everything, and a couple coffins. The pumpkins were incredible. They were the same as the drawing on the Halloween 7". There was a giant video screen behind the band playing images from Misfits records and art, as well as the movies referenced in the songs. I still couldn't believe after almost 30 years, I was seeing my favorite records come to life. Seeing the cover for Horror Business larger than life on the back of the stage was amazing, as it is my favorite Misfits design, and the song is in my top 5. Every one there sung every last word, at times drowning out the band. The pit was like a giant living organism, eating whatever was in the way. Just as quickly as it started, the set seemed to be over. People started heading for the exits and I went near the stage to take a couple photos. A few hours later I was on a plane back to Pittsburgh, eagerly looking forward to round two in Chicago a couple weeks later.



I bought a 3 day pass for Chicago Riotfest as soon as they went on sale. I got to Chicago Friday morning and Tony picked me up at the airport. We headed out to a new skatepark just outside the city, then grabbed lunch. I missed the whole first day, and showed up late for the second day since we hit up a few more parks. It didn't matter, I was really only there for one band. Sunday evening finally rolled around and Douglas Park started to fill up. I had a plan to get a few photos for this show, but I had to work my way to the front, and suffer through a Deftones set, which can be best described as the sound of rollerblading. Prior to the Misfits hitting the stage, people started cramming in just like Denver. I'm pretty sure someone barfed on my leg, but I wasn't about to let that ruin my night. The crowd was getting a little restless. There was a "thank you moustache" chant for the hipster security guard who was handing out bottled of water. The energy in the air was intense. In a moment, all hell broke loose again. Once again, they came out to Death Comes Ripping and I was quickly swallowed up by the pit. Everyone was jammed so tight, it seriously felt like I was in a vice. About 3 songs in, I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to endure an entire set like this again. Fortunately, it seemed like everyone took a step back and I could breathe again. I'll never forget the heat coming from the crowd, despite the cool night. There was a huge dust cloud looming over the pit. I'd take a couple photos and then get pushed, pulled, or shoved off in a new direction. It was like being in the ocean. In the middle of the chaos, I hear "Jeff!" It was Joe from Lifeline Records. He asked how this was comparing to Denver. I started to answer, but then I was pulled back into the melee. Once again, the band absolutely destroyed. For all the concern about the show, and could they pull this off, the Misfits exceeded anyone's expectations. You could tell everyone in the band was into it. They didn't miss a beat. Near the end of the set, there was a small part of me that got a little sad, knowing this was probably going to be it. I was so exhausted, worn out, sweaty, and thirsty by the end of the show. It felt like I had been through a war. But it was worth every single second. I left Chicago knowing in the last 2 weeks, I saw the best two shows I'm ever going to see. I am very grateful and appreciative I was able to make it to both shows. There are no words to express how much it meant to finally see Glenn, Jerry, and Doyle on the stage together. If this is the end, it is the perfect ending to a perfect band. Moments like this never last.

TOO MUCH HORROR BUSINESS

I got in touch with Doyle about answering a few questions about the reunions. The answers are a little short, because he answered them on his phone.

What were your thoughts/feelings going into the first full practice, and while you were at that practice?
My thoughts were why does Dave Lombardo not know these fucking songs? And while I was at practice my thoughts were why does Dave Lombardo not know these songs? And who the fuck is this other guitar player and why the fuck is he here?

What did you think when you first saw the finished stage design and giant Halloween pumpkins?
When they told me there was going to be pumpkins, I thought that was pretty gay until I seen them and they were off the Halloween 45. Then, and only then it made sense.

What were you thinking before hitting the stage in Denver?
HOLY MOTHER FUCKER WHAT THE FUCK?!!! WHY IS MY RIG NOT WORKING?!?!!

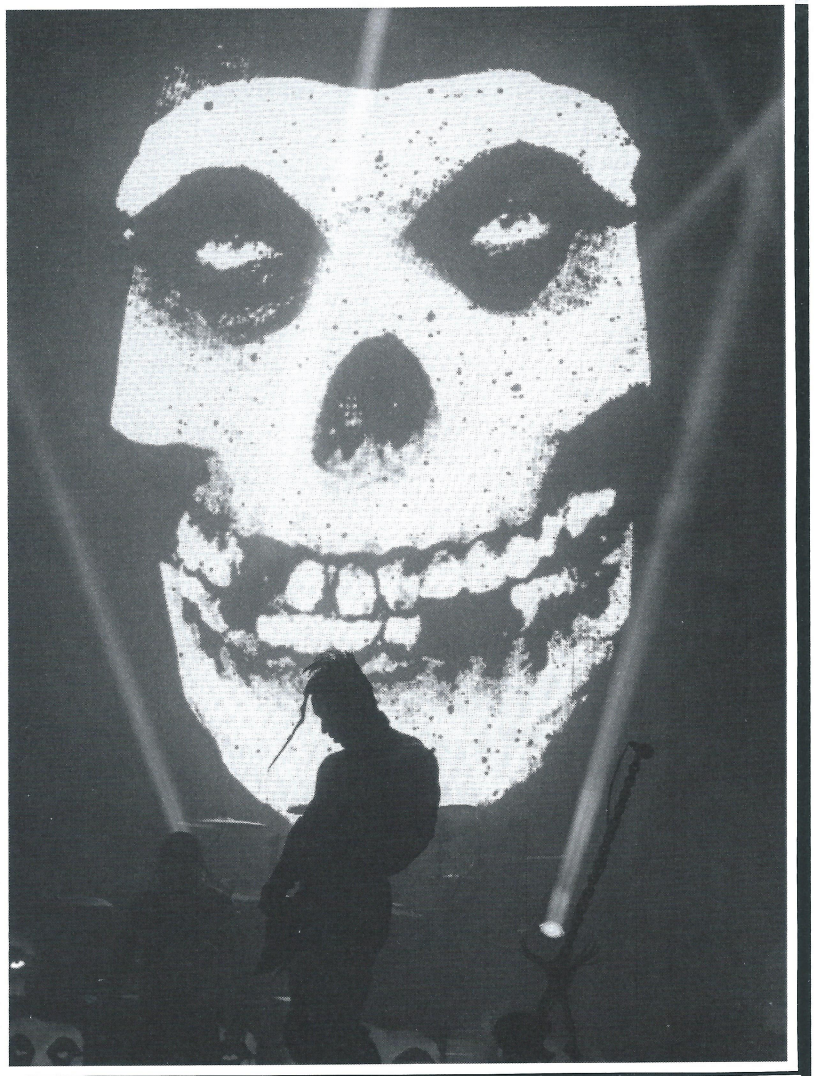
You've played shows in front of large crowds before, how was this different?
I've played way bigger shows. This was different because they were all there to see us, and us only. For the first time everyone there knew who we were. Not like a normal festival where everyone doesn't know.

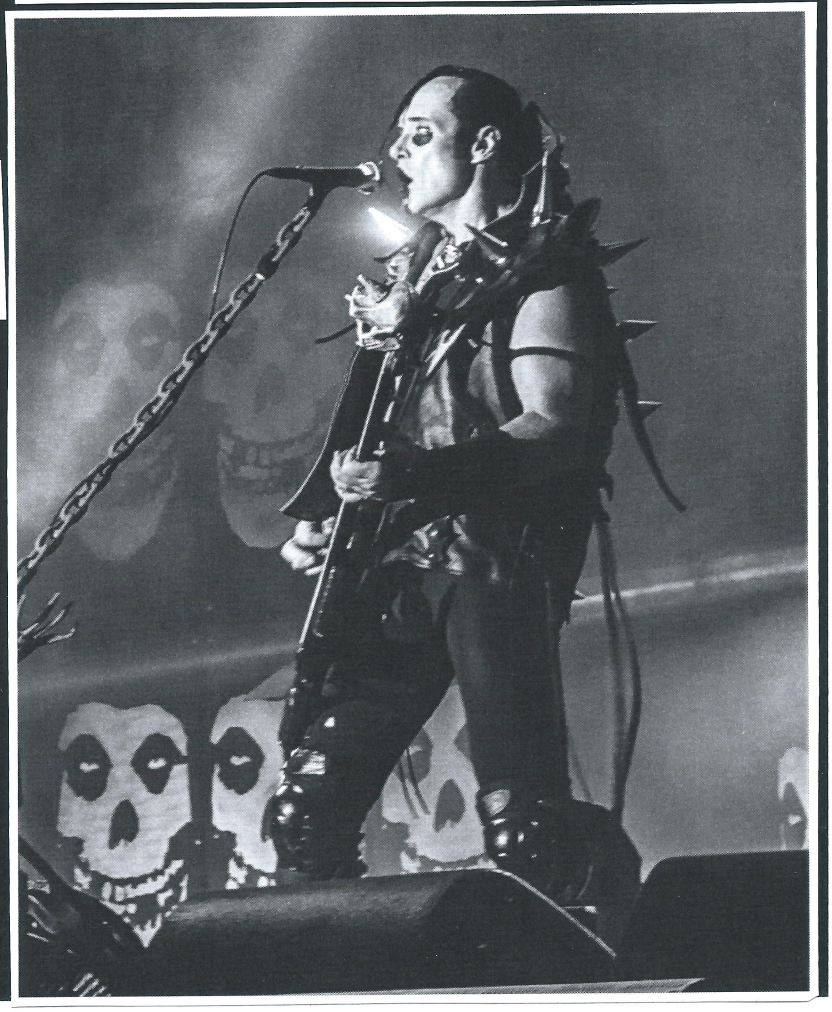
What are your thoughts on the crowd reaction, and the fact that people are still this rabid over the Misfits?
They seemed really calm to me. And of course they're still rabid, we're brutally at its finest.

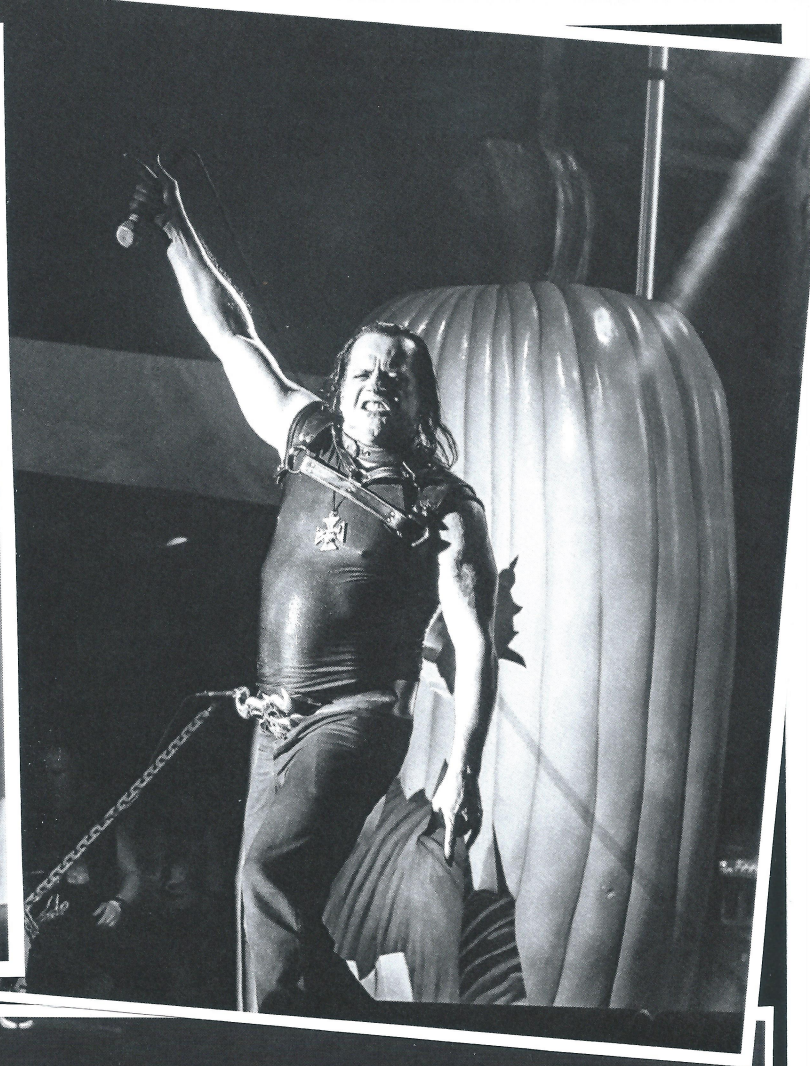
How did you feel about all the attention the reunion got? I thought the internet was going to explode the morning the shows were announced.
I don't think we did nearly enough promotion or picked the proper show to do the first show.

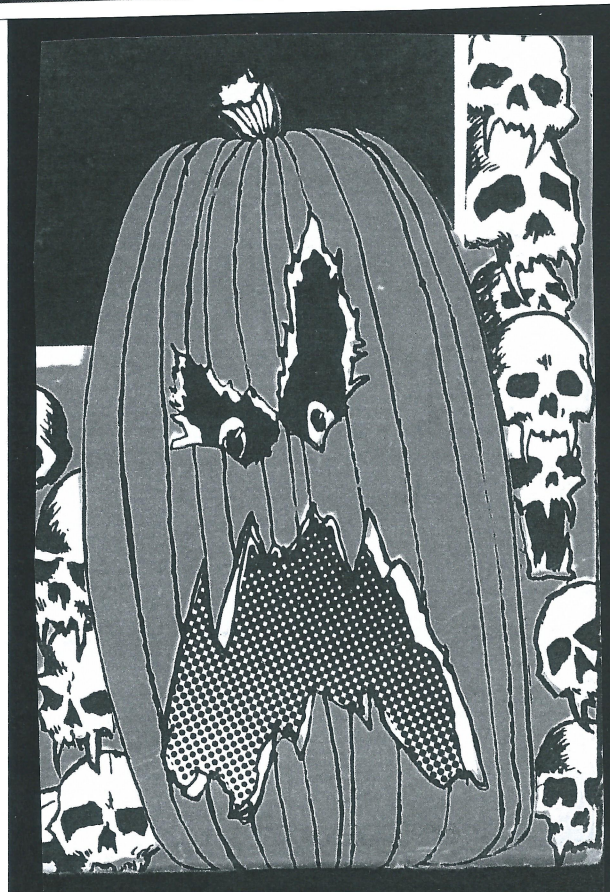
Is there a song you wanted to play, but did not make the final cut?
No

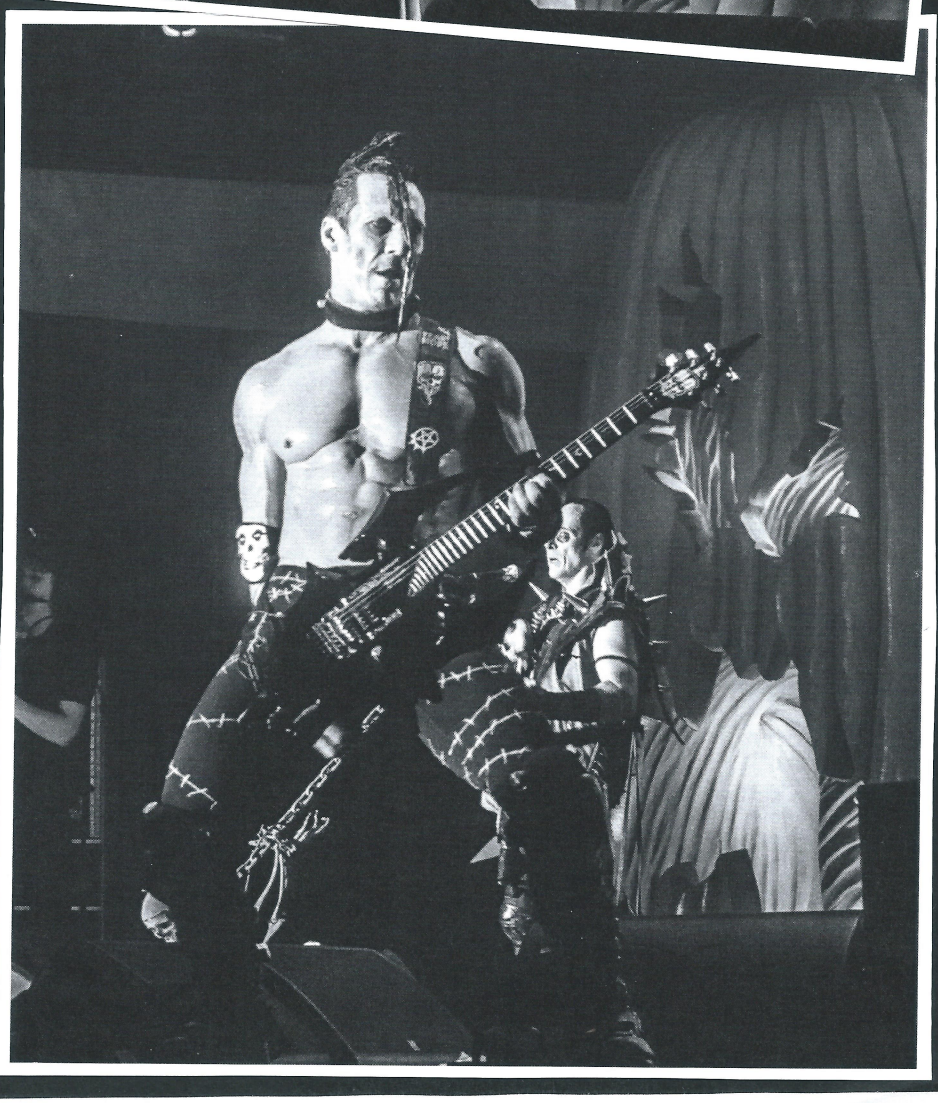
MISFITS

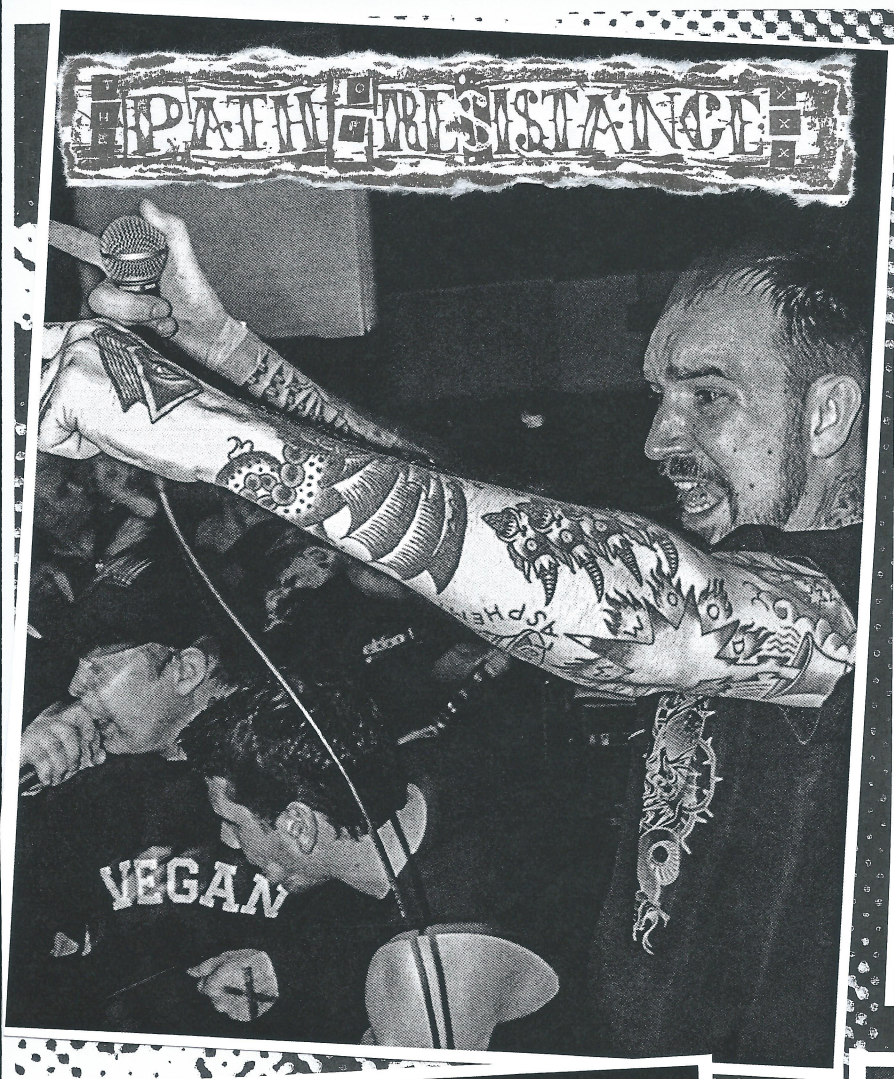


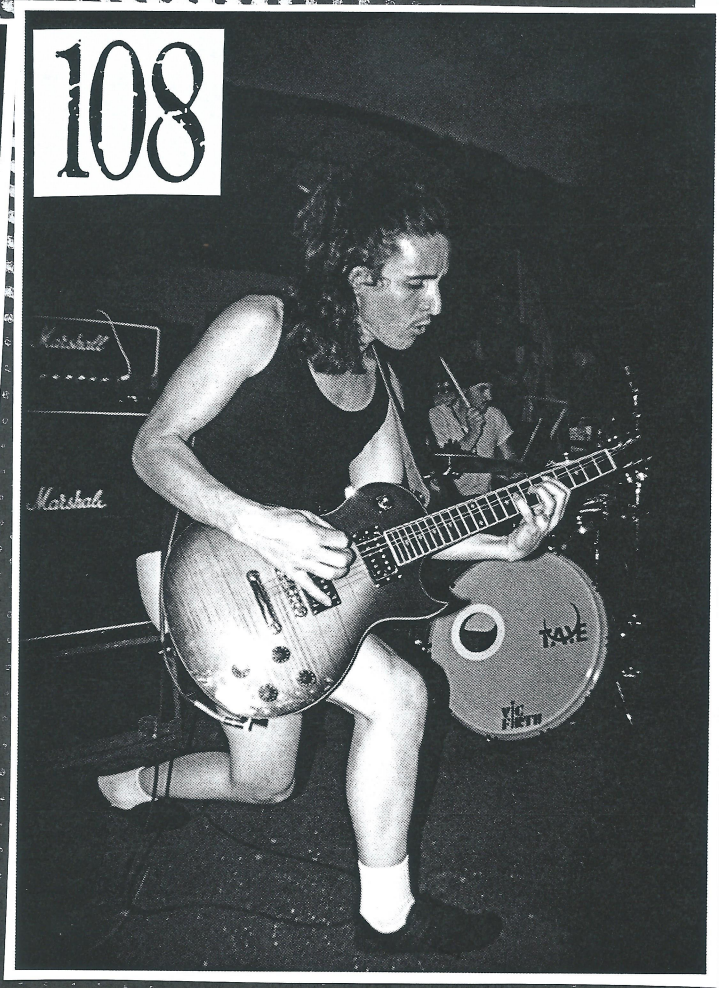









PATH TO RESISTANCE
VEGAN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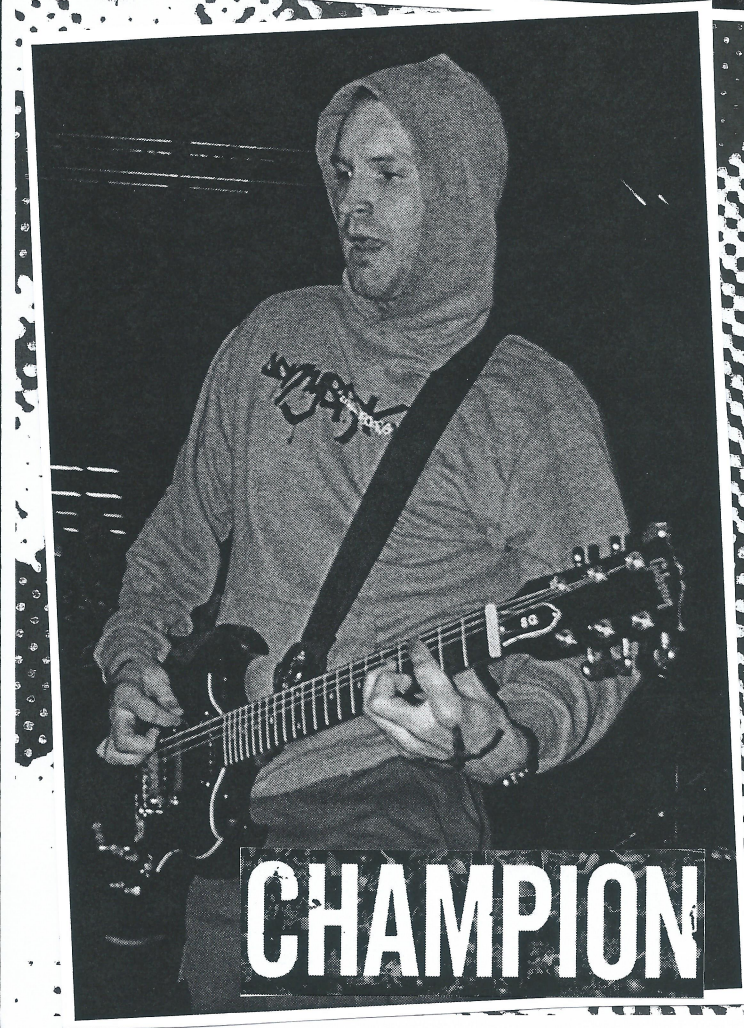
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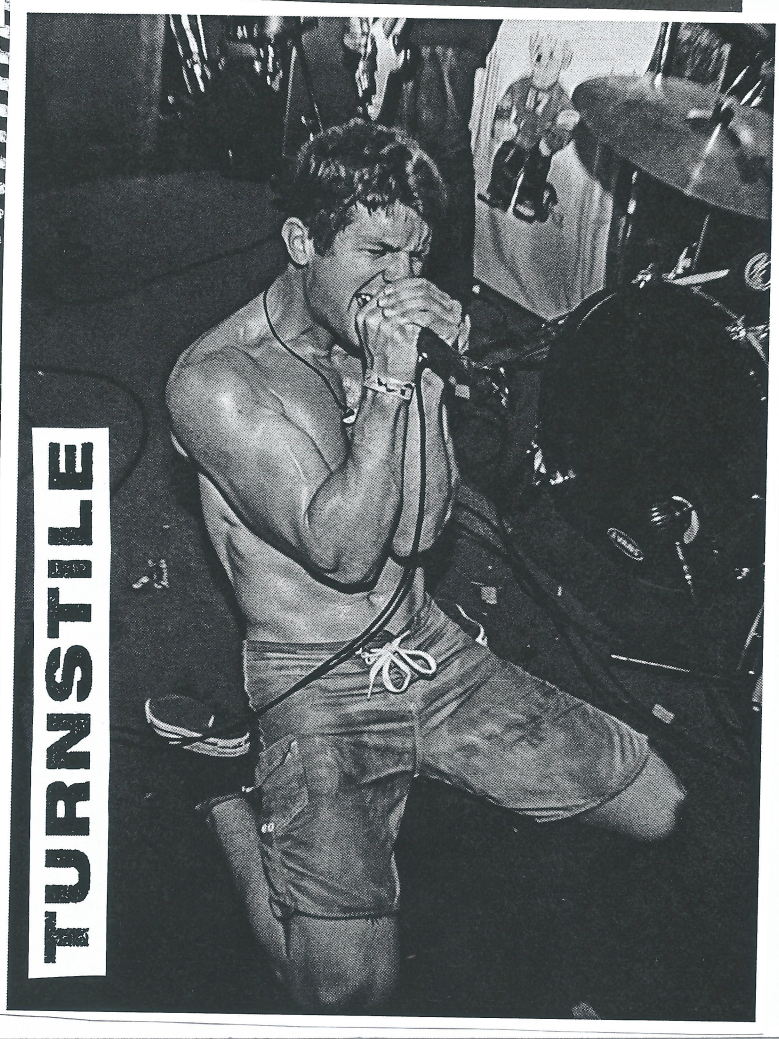

TURNSTILE

UNION OF FAITH
NO TIME TO LOSE

PUT IT ASIDE

H2O

STICK TOGETHER

Bloodclot

PAIN STRIKES

ANCIENT HEADS

HARMS WAY
Marshall

GET THE MOST

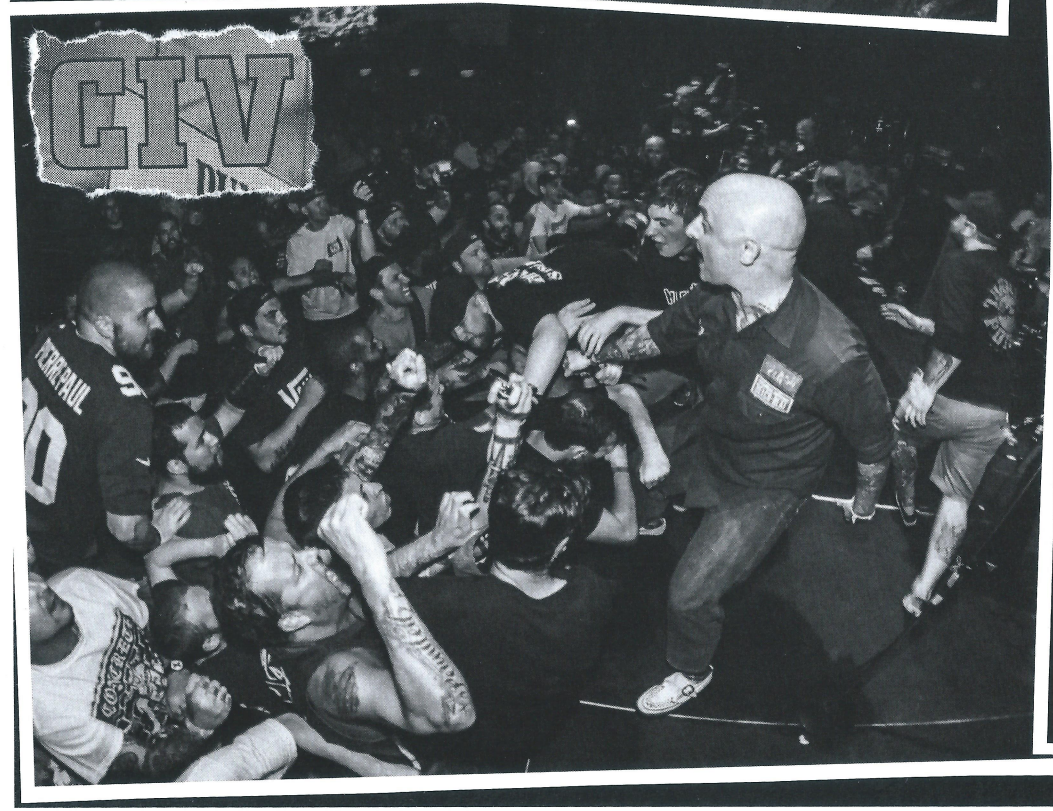
INSTED
JUDGE

JUDGE

BLISTERED

CHOKEHOLD

HAVE HEART
blacklisted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NEGATIVE APPROACH

BANE

GIVE MORE
GIVE EVERYTHING
GIVE BLOOD

I can't imagine there are many people reading this zine who are not familiar with Bane. I can remember first hearing about them around 1997. I think they played Pittsburgh for the first time in 1998. I saw them countless times over the years. Every single time I saw them, they gave it their all- whether they were playing to 30 kids or 2000. I watched the way their songs touched and connected with people. In 2016, after over 20 years, it was time for them to say goodbye. I reached out to Aaron about doing an interview for the zine because their last record, Don't Wait Up, resonated to me on several different levels. I don't know Aaron. I have spoken to him a couple times over the last 20 years. I wasn't sure what to expect from the interview. What I got is probably the best interview that has appeared in this zine. Aaron was candid and raw, emotional and honest. It gave a good glimpse into the person behind all the songs and the rollercoaster that was the end of Bane.

It's crazy how far the band went from starting off as the Converge side project band.
Yeah, we never could have guessed back then what it was all going to turn into or long we would keep it going for.

How were you able to essentially put your life on pause for almost 20 years to do this band?
Well, for me I just never let myself get too tied to something that wouldn't allow the band or that life to absolutely come first. I never had a relationship that displaced Bane from being the top of the priorities list - for better or for worse. Never found "the one." Didn't have kids or buy a home or find myself caught up in a lot of the things that can make the sort of life-style that being in a touring HC band a little bit difficult. I just stayed ready and eager to roll as a default

Do you have any regrets that you did that?
I'd say no. I certainly wouldn't trade the years and the experiences we had for any sort of material wealth or financial security. I never felt ready to settle down and have a family or some sort of normal adult type life. I suppose if that had been my calling I wouldn't have gone that route, found a time for the band to slow down or take a lesser role in my life. That never happened. The tradeoff of what I may have been missing out on didn't even really feel worth thinking about.
Now that it's in the rear-view, I think it's impossible not to wonder at least a little bit about how things maybe could have played out different. Pondering different relationships or some sense of normalcy or security that I may have missed out on along the way. I guess that's just normal when you're an inquisitive person, wondering, 'what if', but the smartest and deepest part of my heart contends that I wouldn't have traded any of the experiences to have wound up with something different- some wife I can barely stand or a home with a fucking lawn I need to mow.

Bane ended up being one hardcore's biggest, most important bands. It seemed that people really related and had strong emotional connections to your songs.
Yeah, I'm not sure what to say about any of that. The tangible merits of this music never really seemed to have anything to do with the sort of normal measuring stick regarding popularity or so-called success. Bigger doesn't mean better and if it does, I feel like the point is being missed a bit. This whole thing was build to destroy the idea of what it means to be successful. Hardcore offers a far more interesting gauge when it comes to that stuff, one that I'd like to think is more about heart and integrity and a sort of putting into it what you're taking from it.

I really tried not to get caught up in how "big" we were or had been or needed to continue to be. Seemed like a lot of stress for something impossible to control. We got to go where we wanted; play the sort of shows we had always dreamed of for ourselves, sometimes playing shows that were more than any of us could have ever dared imagine. We made friends everywhere, got to become close with bands we loved and respected. We got to share stages with bands that had shaped our relationship with music, yeas and years before.

A WASTED LIFE IS WORSE THAN DEATH
IT'S UP TO YOU TO FIGURE OUT THE REST

We never lost track of that stuff- where we came from and how much we loved music just for music's sake. And that kids liked us and liked us unashamedly was something very special, because we were those same guys, that loved bands maybe a bit too intensely, that became overwhelmed by the ability for this whole scene to touch you and change you the way that it can and does. So to find ourselves on the other side of that sometimes, to very much realize that we are in a band that means a lot to certain kids, it was very overwhelming and something that we just wouldn't let ourselves take for granted. In the end that stuff means so much more than money or t-shirts sold or how many kids are in the room when you're playing.

That measuring stick can run so much deeper in this scene of ours. Kids can come to a show and look you right in the eye and say some really affecting things about what the music you have created has meant to their lives. That goes so far beyond the sort of standard ideas regarding success or popularity. I always liked that, for Bane, the idea wasn't about breaking out ahead of the pack, but staying firmly a part of the community as a whole. Staying intimately involved with the moving parts and the younger bands and labels and kids who are the heart and soul of all this.

What were your feelings going into record Don't Wait Up. You knew it was going to be the end. Did you feel extra pressure or relief? Were you worried you weren't going to be able to say everything you needed to say? What impression do you think Bane left? And what would like to see someone take from it (think passing of the torch.)

Yeah, doing that record came with a lot of what you've mentioned. The idea that "this is it." If you have something you want to say, now is the time to do it. What you leave here is how your final statement as a band will be judged from here on out. I think that's impossible not to come with a degree of stress and pressure. I'd say I was pretty stressed from the very first song I wrote for the record (Post Hoc) all the way through until the sessions were recorded and sent off to be pressed. I was left hoping I had done enough; tried as hard as I could try, trusted my instincts to push myself lyrically. There will always be things you wish you change or do over- vocal takes I'd do again, little parts of

songs that maybe we could have worked on a little bit harder. Stuff that no one would notice but us, but that will always be there. With any album or piece or art you put out into the world, you're left with having to face those lingering demons of wishing you had done this different or that a little bit better.

But overall I feel proud of what we made with Don't Wait Up. There was a lot of pressure and an unreal amount of external expectations to make a record we could all feel proud of, while at the same time really trying to block out too much external expectations as far as what kids would think, or think is cool, or what was hot at that time in the scene and all that stuff that you can find yourself very caught up in. We ignored those voices, worked as hard as we'd ever worked on anything. We supported each other, pushed each other and crafted a record that was honest and very loving, as well as yeah, also being aware that this is it- this is a farewell. Being ok with the sadness that is inherently baked into all that.

Are there any bands that you wish you got to play with?
Sure. I'd say most bands we got to play with at this festival or that, but as far as like being able to do a weekend with a band and really spend some time with them- getting to enjoy their sets a few nights in a row and maybe grab some food after the show- that list would be pretty lengthy. From younger bands like Fury or Vein to bands like Nails and Superheaven, who I just love so much. We got to play one of the Unbroken reunions. I wish we coulda toured the whole world with those cats. Killing Time woulda been sick to hang with for some shows. I guess if I had to pick just one, I'd say Quicksand.

Tell me about a couple memorable shows.
That's never been my strong-suit, remembering this show from that show or what made them special. A lot of the shows from the final US tour really stand out for me these days. The very first one that tour was in a hall in New Jersey. No stage and an electricity and emotion in the air that was thick and tangible. I remember after the first block of songs, after the crowd had just gone completely buck and really were singing along like it was the last time, Zach and I shared this look that felt like, *WTF this is insane. What are we doing, why are we walking away from this?*

I'LL BURN THIS WHOLE PLACE DOWN ROLL RIGHT OUT OF THIS FUCKING TOWN BEFORE I BECOME THE THINGS THAT I DESPISE

I remember feeling super overwhelmed in that moment, like how on earth am I going to survive 5 weeks of this level of raw emotion and farewells when, fuck do I still love all of this!

Also the last show of that tour at the Webster in NYC really stands out, just another incredible night, with so many friends everywhere and the whole room fired up. The set ended and we added more songs, which is something we really never did unless forced. But that night I remember feeling like I don't want this to end. In a very stark and naked way I was trying to prologue the tour, extend it any way that I could for even a few more minutes. The feeling of being tired or excited to get home after 5 weeks and collapse into my own bed, or not having to keep hugging and saying goodbye to people or places that I loved just didn't compare to how much I wanted the tour to last just a tiny bit longer.

The first time we played Fluff Fest, a large, fiercely independent festival they have every summer in Czechoslovakia, is a night I'll never forget. Being really far to the east of Europe, it was outdoors, the sun was setting and we got one of the craziest responses we'd ever received. It felt like a lot of kids were seeing us for the very first time, because the places they come from just don't get a lot of shows and this was their chance. And the response was unreal, in this way where it just felt very earnest and passionate. Somehow different than a lot of the big festival responses that headlining-type bands will get and even come to expect. This felt different somehow; turned up a bit more than normal. It's the best festival in the world if you ask me, because there is just this very clear sense there that the kids and the promoters are all one in the same. Their mission statement is so crystal clear and pure, they are putting on a festival because they love this music and want to give back and have bands be able to come pretty far east and have a great experience. It just feels like a fest that truly wears its heart on its sleeve in a way that I will always respect so much more than a fest that is really professional.

Was there a song when you wrote it, you just KNEW it was gonna be epic?
Honestly I never wrote a song that I just knew was going to take off live. I'd actually say the opposite was more normal. I'd write a song and think, man this is gonna be the new Superhero or Can We Start Again, only to see it never get that sort of response. Anytime I thought I knew I turned out wrong, so for the last record I just came at them with no expectation at all.

What about the pizza party during your set at This is Hardcore. Bane was a serious band, yet you never took yourself so seriously.

And I totally agree with what you're saying. We were a weird mix because we had some real goofs in the band, guys who lean way more towards not really liking to take things too seriously and always wanting it to be a great big pizza party, and then me who came into this with a pretty serious, life and death, sort of attitude. I took the vehicle of being in a hardcore band very seriously. I'm sure some would say too seriously. But those were the bands for me, ya know? The bands who did take carry this ferocious attitude regarding the mission they were on. Bands who gave off that very serious vibe like Embrace or Youth of Today or Inside Out. Where it felt like this is no laughing matter, this is everything for me. That's really the only way I knew how to attack things in life. But yeah if you peeked through the surface a bit you would see a lot of silliness and a real effort in not taking ourselves or the life too serious, and honestly thank god for that. If everyone had the same attitude and ideals that I carried, we would have been unbearable to be around.

Do you ever watch videos from your shows and just think "damn!"

Nah, I honestly don't do much of that. Don't really google the band or search for us on youtube. When it was all happening it felt silly to be spending any energy on wallowing in what we've already done. In the last year I haven't had the ability to do it because my heart is still so heavy with missing it all. Even photos that show up on facebook or instagram have been tough for me. That probably sounds like some overly emotional dramatics, but it really is true. It stings so much more than it feels good or like I can pat myself on the back or enjoy this thing that we did. I look at it and just feel like, *fuck. fuck did I love all of that!*

Maybe someday that nostalgia will kick in and I'll want to look back and enjoy the videos or the looking back in a way that feels safe and reasonable, enjoy the things we did and the times we had from a safer or more settled place. But I'm not there yet.

I CAN STILL SEE THE REASONS
THAT I OPENED MY EYES TO THIS SCENE FOR THE FIRST PLACE

COUNT ME OUT

One time I was in this kinda hipster, cool-guy restaurant here in Boston and when I walked in they were playing Give Blood. It was weird cause at first I couldn't place it, but I knew it was super familiar, familiar in a way where I should have known more quickly what it was. But still it took a sec and then I realized and felt a little embarrassed standing there listening to my own band. Then I had to admit man, *holy fuck this record sounds sick. I can't believe how ill this sounds all these years later. Listen to those fucking drums!*

But I really don't go searching for those moments or ego-boosts all on my own. Honestly just never held too much interest for me.

I know that Can We Start Again was always a crowd favorite. As an older person, I related a little to that song because I didn't really fit in outside the scene. And I was always skating with a radio nearby. It could have been a snapshot of my high school years.
Thanks man, that's really what I was gunning for when I sat and wrote that; trying to channel those feelings of being young and on a skateboard and with your friends when everything felt so pure and right and infinite.

Is that you on the cover of the Wishing Well press of Break Down the Walls? Do you remember that show?
Yes I am on the cover of that record, but I'm not the person a lot of people think to think is me. I'm not up front, I'm not on the stage. I'm this lonely little 16 year old face buried back in the crowd. It was my first time seeing Youth of Today live. They were the reason I had gone to the show. I took a bus by myself from Worcester to see them.

A few weeks, maybe a month before, I had seen Crippled Youth (Bold) for the first time. That was my very first exposure to the youth crew and right away I was infatuated and wanted more. I talked to Tim their bass player after their set and he told me about YOT and Underdog and that things were getting really good in the CT/NY scenes at that time in 1986. So as soon as I had the chance to see YOT I wasn't missing it and it was absolutely life changing. Like without an ounce of hyperbole that set changed everything for me. The way I viewed what a band could look like or make you feel like. The way I dressed changed, the bands I was drawn to changed. I felt more like I had found my place than I ever had before. I was the perfect age, yeah- 16 years old. I was already hopelessly in love with hardcore and rebellion and friendship and then along comes the youth crew and YOT. YOT were the best of the best and arguably never better or hungrier or more pure than they were right then in 1986, between Can't Close My Eyes and BDTW. I got very lucky to be the age I was and live in the area I lived in right exactly when that scene was taking hold.

But being at that show where they were just a name to me and opening for 7 Seconds, I would have had no idea the weight of what I was seeing held, and would hold for literally 30+ years onward. You could have told me that day "hey your face is going to be on the cover of their first LP" and I woulda nodded and thought, "oh cool." I never ever would have imagined that their first LP was going to be as colossally influential and affecting as it turned out to be. All these years later there would be people who are excited to hear that I was at that show.

It was a tiny little venue that I had been to countless times before leading up to that show, they were a band that was doing something new. They had this incredible vibe to them and I'm pretty sure I spent most of their set with my jaw resting on the floor thinking, *holy fuck, this is the coolest thing I've ever seen!*

Tell me about the day after the last show. The day that you became "the guy who used to sing for Bane."
Yeah man, that was the thing right? I had been thinking about and preparing for and fretting over that exact moment for so many years. When I wrote End with An Ellipses in 2005 I was already trying to come to grips with someday that morning was going to come. That no matter how much I wanted something to last forever it just wasn't allowed, that time would eventually win the tug of war and it would all end. Then we did this incredibly stupid thing by coming up with the whole game plan that we did- to announce the end and make one last record and ride out the whole "farewell" journey for like 2 fucking years, going everywhere and dangling in front of kids that, *hey this is it.. this is goodbye.*

Deciding to become intimately involved in our ending, seems so misguided to me looking back at that decision. We would say we're writing our own ending. And we did that. We really steered the ship into port, on our own terms and timetable, and got the most out of those last tours. We wrung out every drop of emotion that we could and it was both beautiful and incredibly hard and exhausting and naive to ever think that that was a smart road to take. For two years I had to say goodbye over and over and over again to people and places and things I flat-out did not want to say goodbye to. I had real breakdowns throughout. It wasn't normal. You know I've been through deaths, both of my parents, horrible accidents and suicides that took friends from me far too quickly and that stuff happens in life. You find a way to survive it and carry on. This was putting similar feelings to that on this sort of twisted repeat. Like a very sad song, over and over again. Night after night

That date, that morning you're asking me about, became scarier and scarier. I never wanted it to end. There wasn't some part of me that was excited to not be in Bane anymore. I literally had no idea what I was going to do or how I was going to survive it.

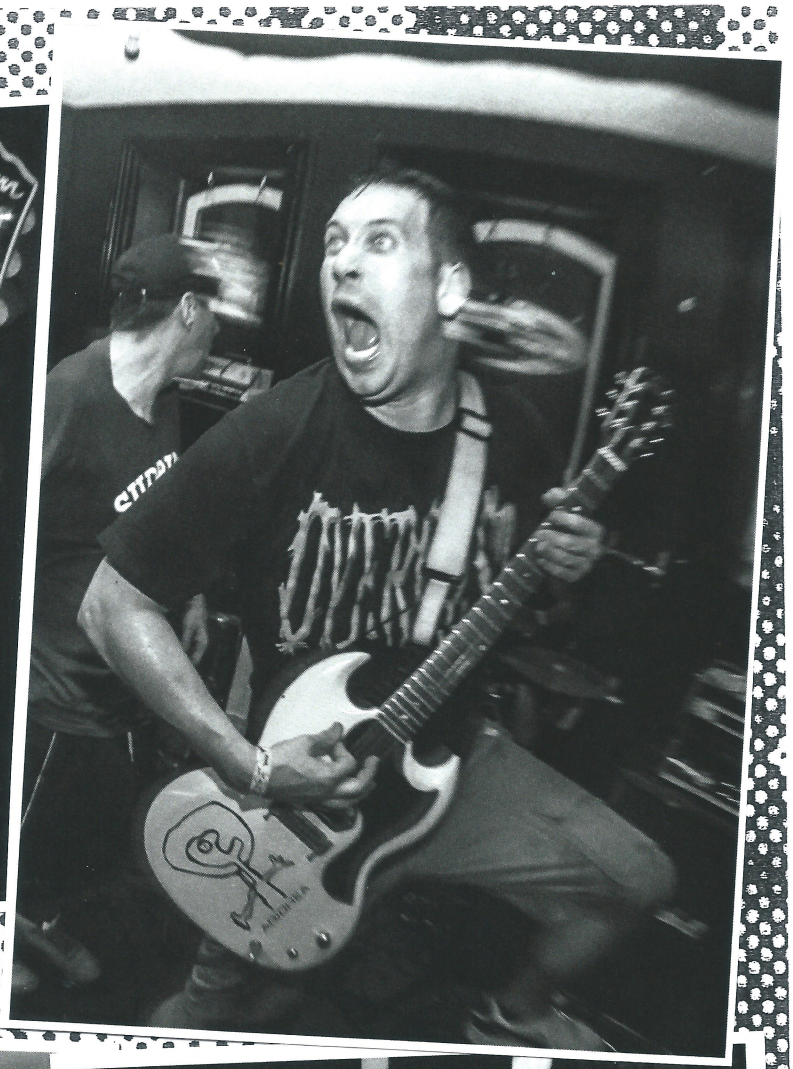
I hate change. I'm terrible at goodbye. I fucking HATE when things are taken from me. Yet we had set this plan in motion and reached this point of no return and every day it got a little closer. The very end all went by so fast. It was an actual blur. I remember no real details from the last show; it was like I was holding on for dear life and just trying not to die, right there on the spot, just lay down and stop feeling all of this. I had to fight every minute of that day and that last set to just make it to the next minute. Then it was done.

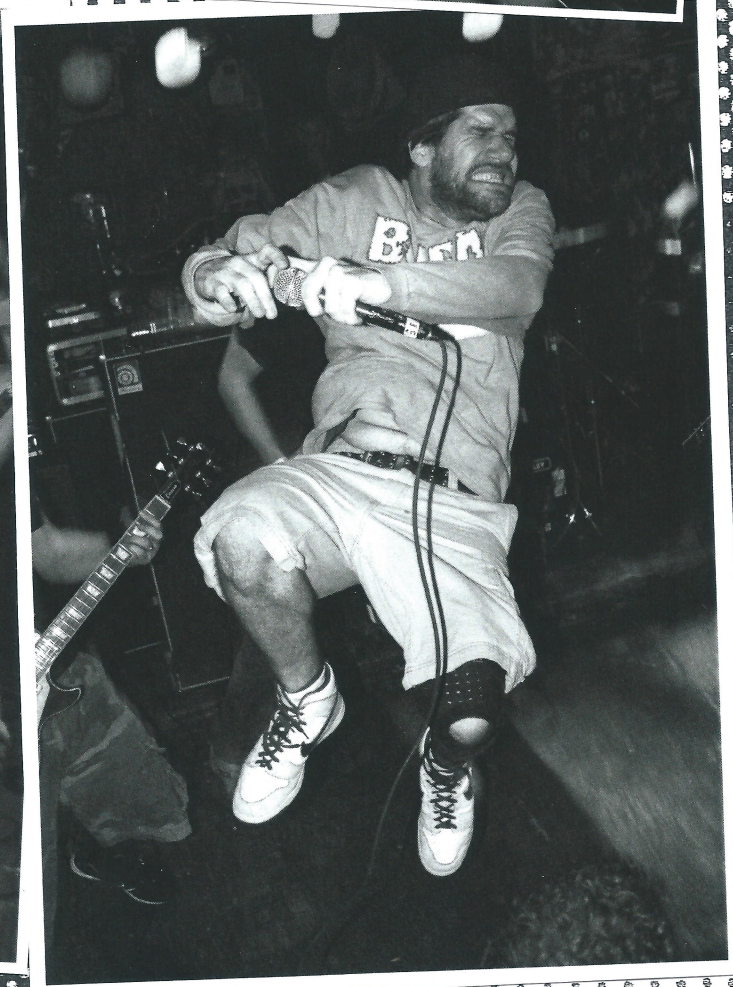
I had my best friend next to me when it was all over with and I had survived it and knew that I would find a way to keep going. The next morning I woke up; the day I'd been waiting for and wondering about for so fucking long. And the weirdest thing, I'll never forget it; the overriding emotion was so surprising: I felt relief. There was nothing left required of me as far as holding on or staying strong and together for the betterment of the whole. I could finally be at one with it and really see what it felt like to not be the kid from Bane anymore. I didn't have to hug another sad, trembling body who really wanted me to understand what this had all meant for them. I didn't have to attempt the nearly impossible task of explaining to them how hearing that made me feel. I had made it through. I knew that I was going to miss it forever and ever. I will tell you right now I'd go rushing back to it all if I could but that first feeling; I didn't feel lost or heartbroken or like some washed up shell of myself. Somehow I felt relieved.

What's going on with you now and future plans?
Nothing, nothing at all. Still trying to figure out what's next. Trying to stop spinning my wheels and do something. Spending way too much time at the poker table or with hobbies that give me a hiding place and keep me from facing the real big questions regarding what will make me happy. Sometimes I think I'd like to start a new band with Zach. Or do more DJing or figure out how to make some fuzzed-out super dreamy electronic music. Sometimes I think the thing I really need to do is keep writing. I feel like I have all these stories forever brewing in me. Maybe make a comic-book. Maybe roadie for a band that is on that next level up; buses and airports and hotel rooms. I really loved the that part of being in a touring band- VIP passes and getting to watch a band like Down or Blink from right up on the side of the stage at some big fest. Hotel rooms and living a life that was very much in motion. Lately I've been doing a lot of thinking about how much I liked that and ways where I could get back to it somehow.

Final thoughts?
Thanks to anyone who took the time to read this. Hello to my friends living in all corners of the world, most of whom I normally would have seen at least once in the last year. I miss all of you so much.
Mad love to the Bane boys and bigups to CANDY, that demo fucking rips

Washburn





ANCIENT
HEADS

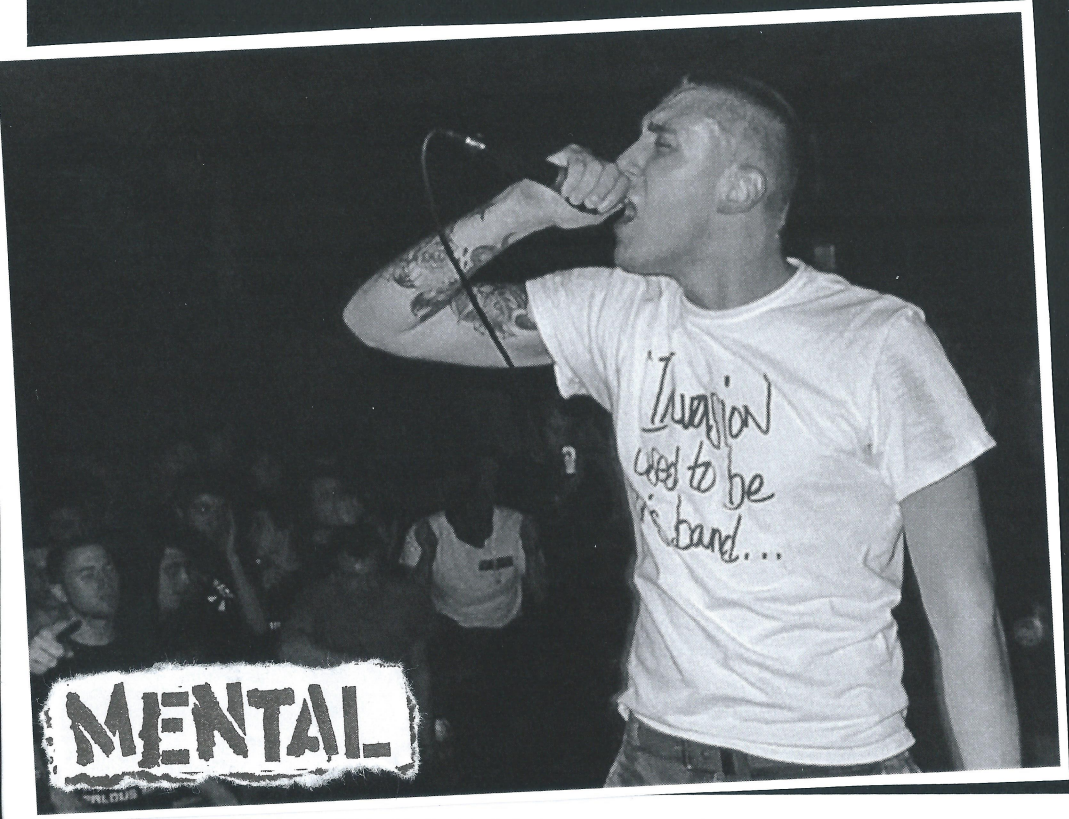
WORLD
BE
FREE

THE FLEX

BLISTERED
reprisal

American Nightmare

THE FIRST STEP


MENTAL

WARXGAMES

the geeks

DEFEATER

GHOSTxSHIP
CARRY THE FLAME

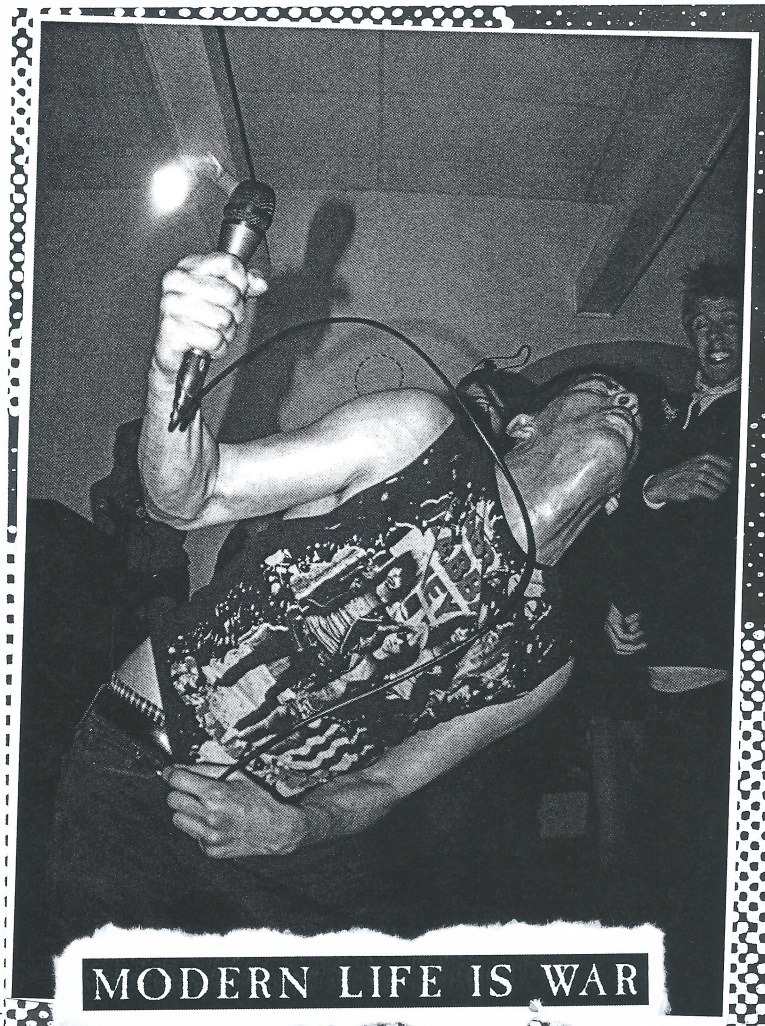
OUTBREAK

TRUE VISION
XXX
Marshall

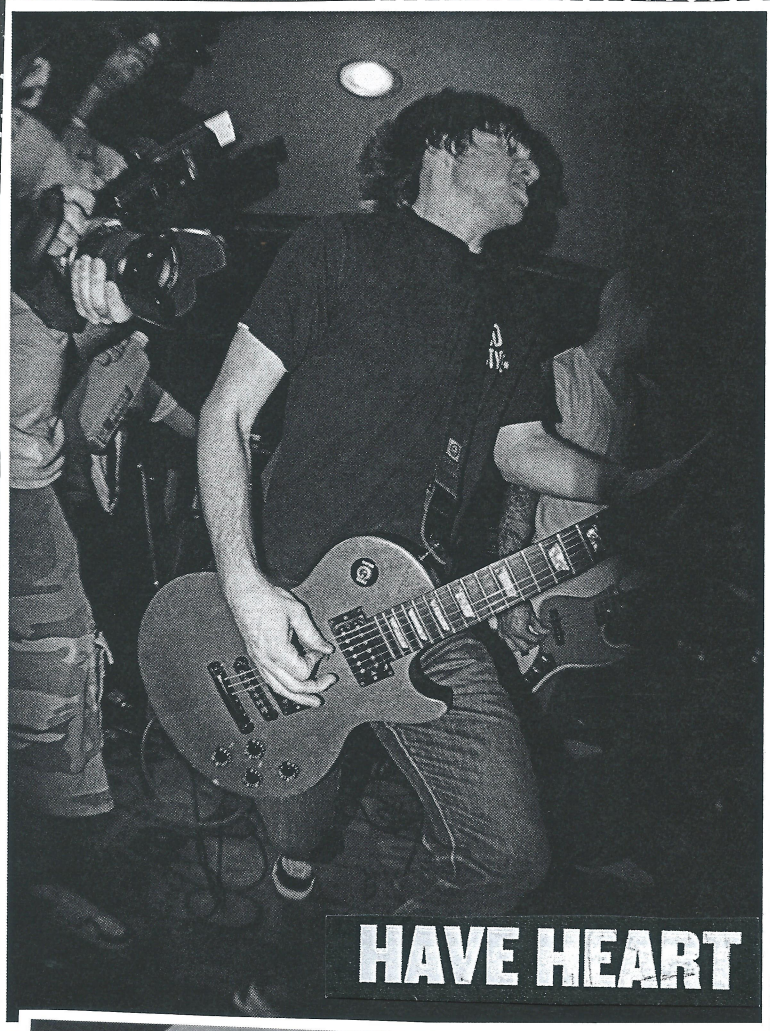
FREE

UNION OF FAITH

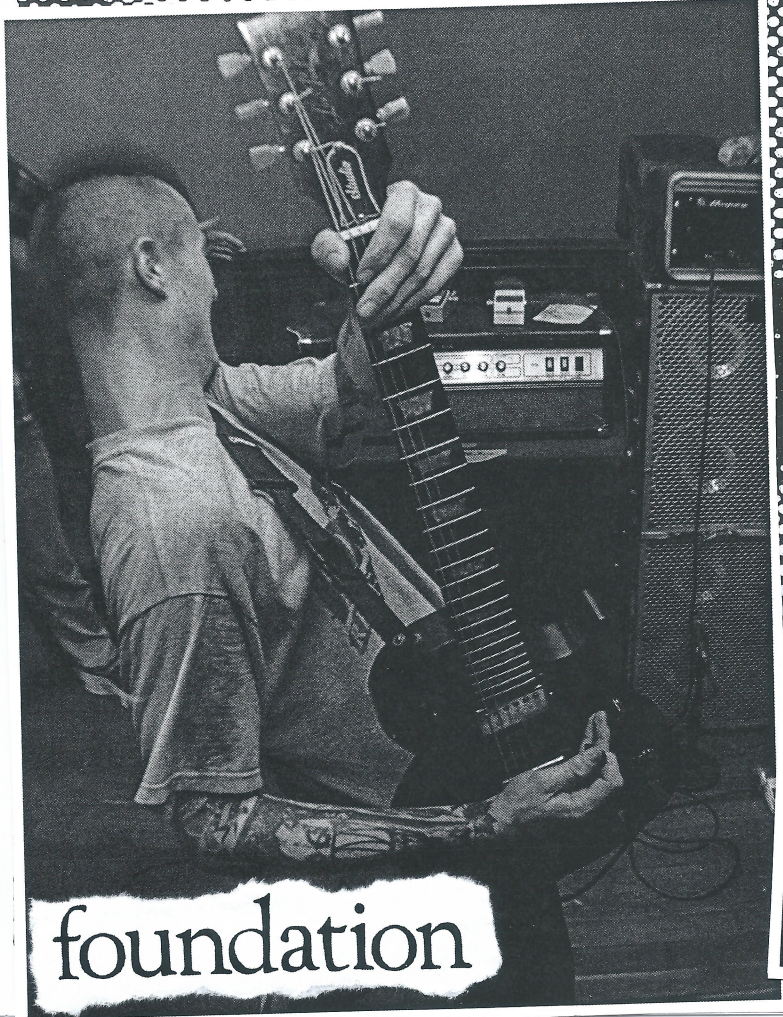
SPORTSWEAR
INSIST



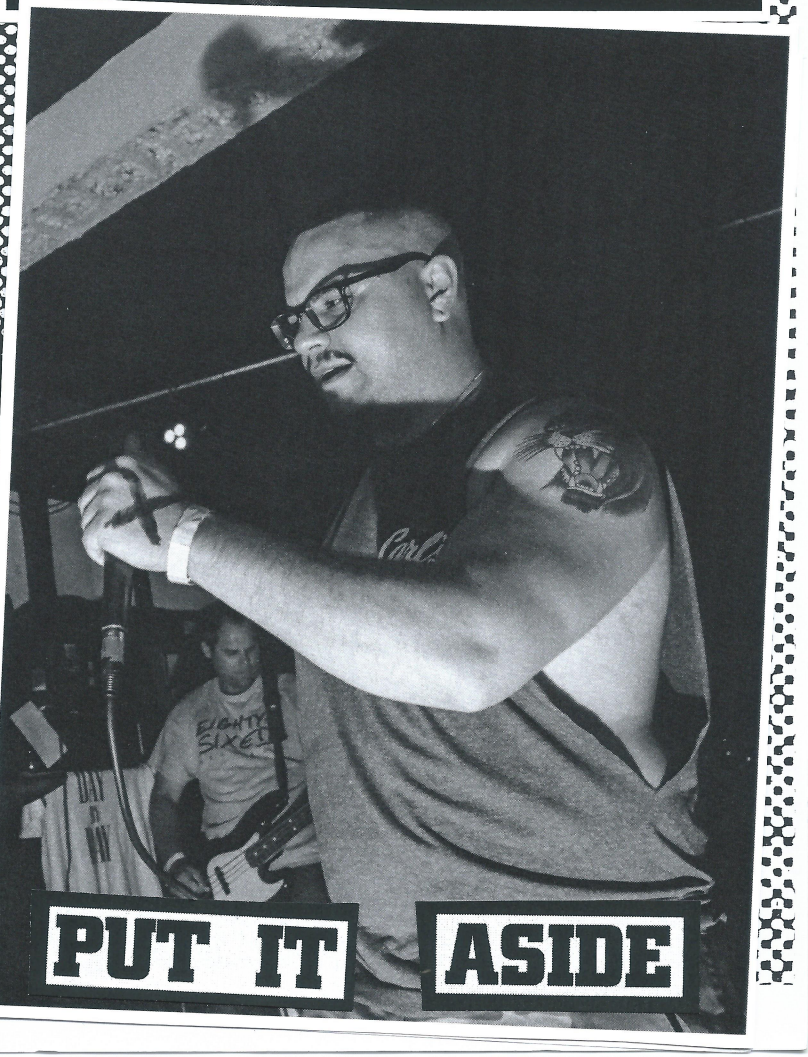
MODERN LIFE IS WAR



HAVE HEART



foundation



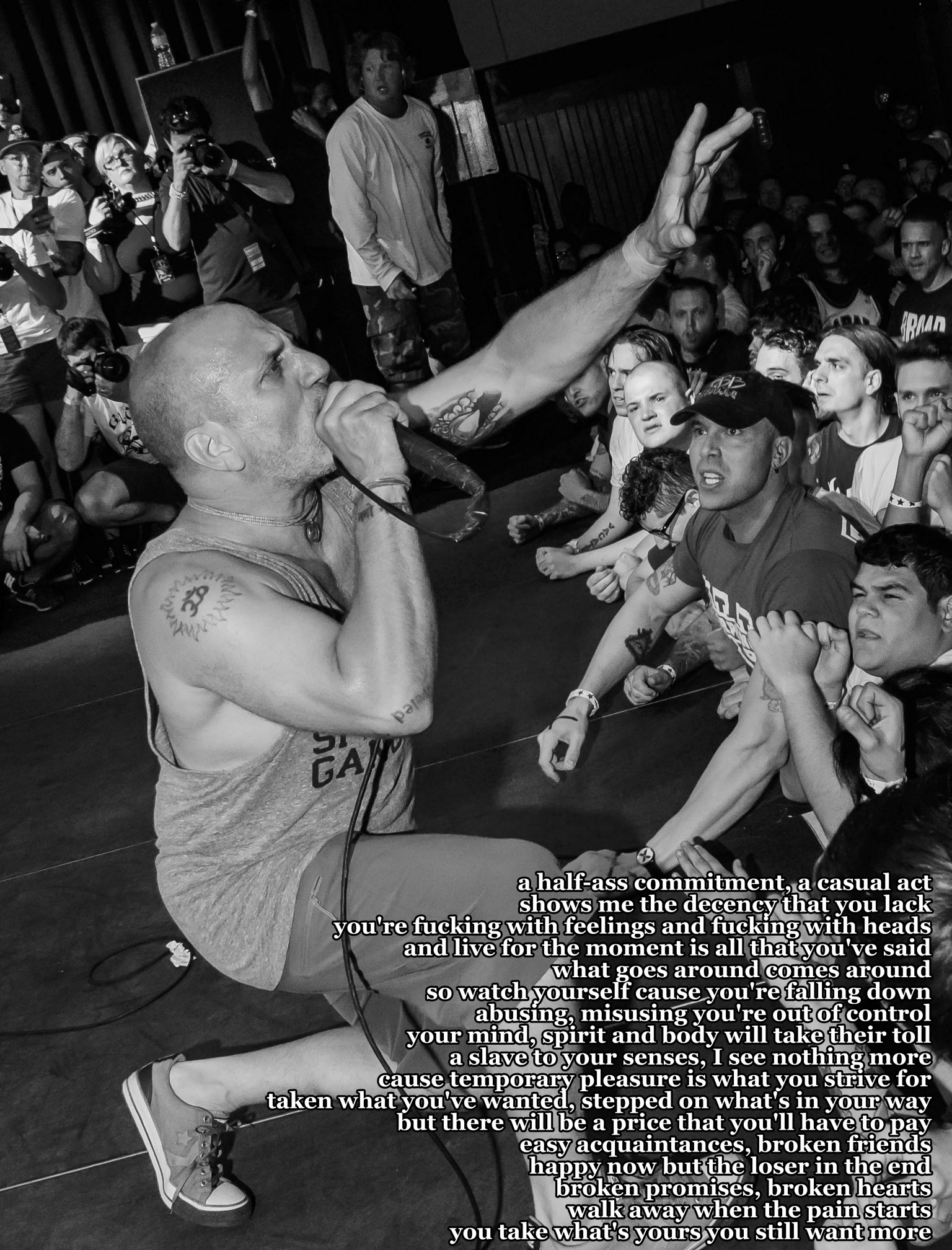
PUT IT ASIDE

STAY IRONIZED

Lion Of Judah

TRUE LOVE

ANCIENT HEADS



a half-ass commitment, a casual act
shows me the decency that you lack
you're fucking with feelings and fucking with heads
and live for the moment is all that you've said
what goes around comes around
so watch yourself cause you're falling down
abusing, misusing you're out of control
your mind, spirit and body will take their toll
a slave to your senses, I see nothing more
cause temporary pleasure is what you strive for
taken what you've wanted, stepped on what's in your way
but there will be a price that you'll have to pay
easy acquaintances, broken friends
happy now but the loser in the end
broken promises, broken hearts
walk away when the pain starts
you take what's yours you still want more

you know that in your heart
that you don't fit in
their chemical crutch
can't be your solution
the years wear on
you watch others fall
but you're still on this path
you walk alone

THIS IS MY
FINAL BACKWARD GLANCE...
GOODBYE